

# History

In The Making

Volume II

Political Essays on

Armenia, Egypt, Lebanon

Suren Khirwadkar

History  
In The Making  
Volume I

*Political Essays On*  
America, Israel, Afghanistan

America

*"US democracy is in peril"*  
President Joe Biden

\*

Israel

*"Next year in the re-built Jerusalem"*  
Jewish Prayer

\*

Afghanistan

*"You have watches, we have time."*

Taliban Commander

\*







# History

## In The Making

### Volume II

Political Essays on  
Armenia, Egypt, Lebanon

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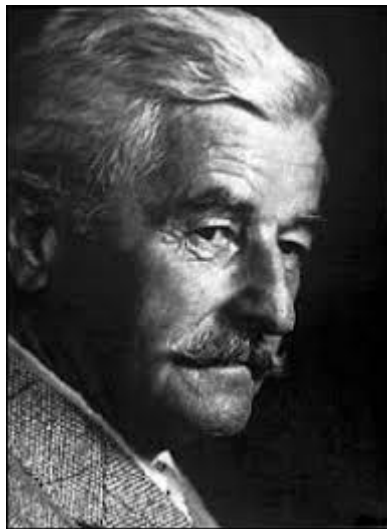
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4. Egypt: Old Pharaohs and New
5. Lebanon: Paris Doesn't Live Here Anymore

The past is never dead. It's not even past.

William Faulkner,

Requiem for a Nun



Credit: olemiss.edu

For

Surekha



## Introduction

I am humbled by the reception accorded to my writing debut, History In The Making, Volume I. Just goes to show that there are more kind people in the world than one assumes.

One unlikely kind person is Xi Jinping, whose wrath on the world forced many to remain home-bound for months and years. Trained to make lemonade out of the Life's lemons, I took the opportunity to read and read and read some more. One result is this volume II of History In The Making!

Armenia, Egypt, and Lebanon are the subjects of my four political essays in this volume. I haven't had the pleasure of visiting Armenia, but have met and worked with quite a few Armenians and I am absolutely in love with their *joie de vivre*! I have had the pleasure of visiting the other three countries a few times and have beneficially interacted with many of their countrymen.

I wrote in the introduction to the first volume of H I T M that in my opinion, Google and Wikipedia are two great universities, who have made information and knowledge accessible to their seekers as never before. I am indeed, deeply grateful to them for making the quest for understanding the world around us, a most delightful enterprise.

Similarly, great publications like The New York Times, The Washington Post, The New Statesman, The Guardian, The New Yorker and the wise pundits like Fareed Zakaria, Tom Freedman, Richard Haass, David Frum, Paul Krugman, George F. Will, Ross Douthat, David Brooks and many others continue to enliven inquiry and discussion.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Surekha, who came into my life when I was utterly distraught and proceeded to breathe new life into me. I am also thankful to Jit, Abhi and Partha for their help.

I would also like to record the wonderful support from Anagha Karhade and her team, who have brought fun to the whole exercise.

Suren Khirwadkar: Pune, 15 August 2022





Armenia: Noah's forgotten children

## Armenia: Noah's forgotten children

Mankind has seen many horrific periods of barbarity, but no nation has suffered so much from religious persecution, over such a long time, as Armenia has.

The great shame is that most of the Christian nations also chose to ignore the great agony of this tiny nation, which became the first Christian state when Tiridates III (238–314) made Christianity the state religion in 301 AD.

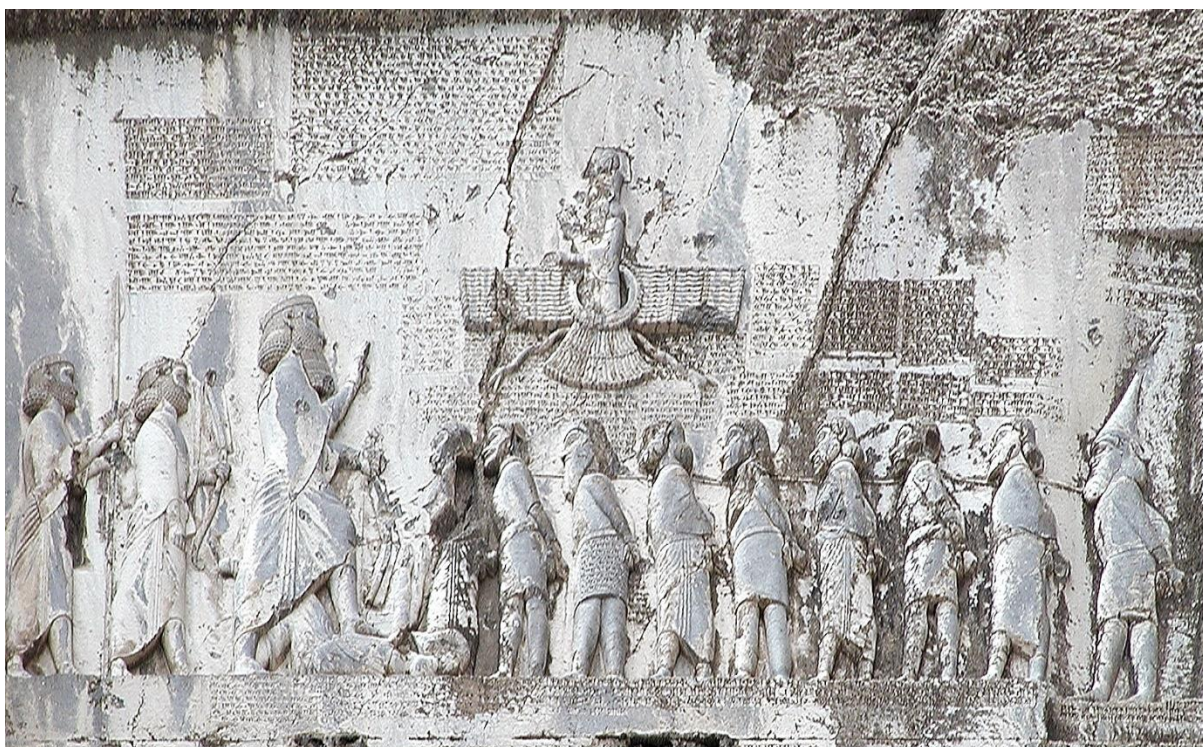


Tiridates III (238–314), Credit: humbleandloyalblogspot.com

The Book of Genesis (the first book of the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament) is viewed by the faithful as the account of the creation of the world. According to it, God created a world which was good and fit for man, but when he corrupted it with Sin, He decided to destroy His creation, sparing only the righteous Noah and his family to re-establish the relationship between Him and man.

The first covenant with Noah speaks of the mountains of Ararat where Noah's Ark came to rest after the great flood (Genesis 8:4). The Biblical Ararat was named 'Arminya' by the Persians.

Behistun, a historical town in Iran, is the site of many ancient monuments, one of which carries an inscription by Darius I. In this trilingual inscription, carved in 521 BC, there is a reference to '*Arminya*' in Old Persian.



Behistun inscription reliefs, Credit: wikipedia.org

The Book of Jubilees, also called the Lesser Genesis, speaks of the Ark coming to rest on one of the peaks of the ‘Mountains of Ararat’ (7:1). The original translation of the Bible into Latin says: *Requievitque arca... super montes Armeniae*, which literally means, ‘And the ark rested... on the mountains of Armenia’.

Harrison Ford was not the first ‘Raider of the Lost Ark’! The quest for the remains of Noah’s ark in the mountains of Armenia consumed the ancient world. The Greek historian Abydenus wrote around 200 BC: *“To him the Deity foretold that on the fifteenth day of the month, there would be a deluge of rain: and He commanded him to deposit all the writings which were in his possession, in the city of the Sun in Sippara. When he had complied with commands, he sailed immediately to Armenia and was presently inspired by God. With respect to the vessel, which yet remains in Armenia, it is a custom of the inhabitants to form bracelets and amulets of its wood.”*

He seems to be echoing the words of Nicolaus of Damascus, another Greek historian, who wrote in 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, *“There is, in the land of Armenia, a very great mountain which is called Baris/Masis; to which, it is said, that many persons retreated at the time of the deluge, and were saved; and that one in particular was carried thither in an ark, and was landed on its summit, and that the remains of the vessel were long preserved upon the mountain. Perhaps this was the same individual to whom Moses the legislator of the Jews has made mention.”*





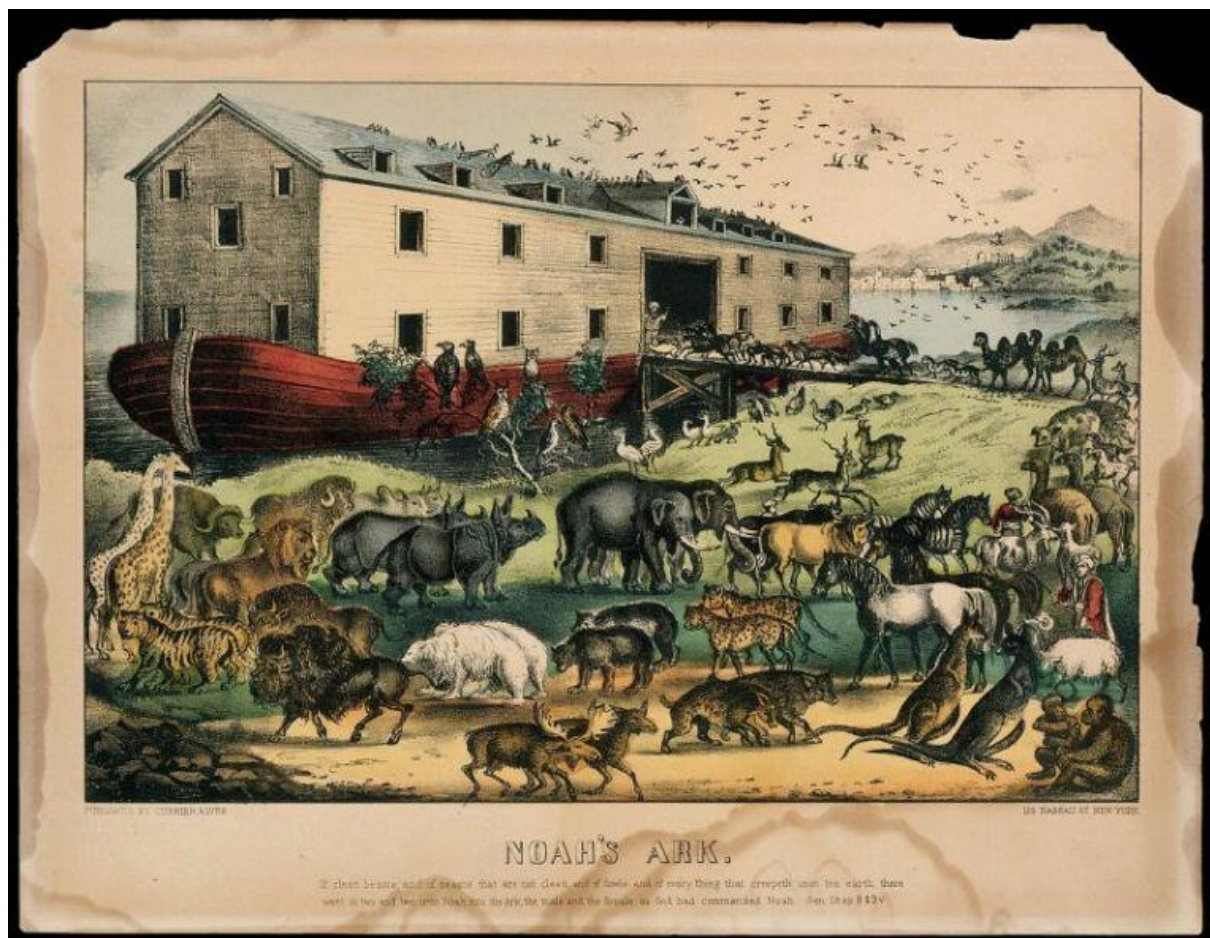
Depiction of Noah's ark landing on the mountains of Armenia,  
From the North French Hebrew Miscellany (13<sup>th</sup> century), Credit: Wikipedia.org

Alexander Polyhistor (50 BC) describes a similar flood story, in which a Deity appears to Xisuthrus (*Ziusudra, or Xisouthros of Shuruppak [c. 2900 BC] listed as the last king of Sumer prior to the Great Flood. He is subsequently recorded as the hero of the Sumerian creation myth and appears in the writings as Xisuthros*) in a vision warning him of an imminent flood, which would destroy mankind. The Deity tells Xisuthrus to build a vessel, and take with him his friends and relations, together with animals of different types. When Xisuthrus asks the Deity where the vessel will be heading, the Deity answers: *"To the Gods."*



'NOAH'S ARK on Mount Ararat' (1570) by Flemish painter Simon de Myle,  
Credit: Wikipedia Commons

Mount Ararat in ancient Armenia was considered the home of Gods, much like Mount Olympus in Greek mythology. After the flood, Xisuthrus released birds to search for land which he found after the 3<sup>rd</sup> try. Xisuthrus and his companions initially decided to turn the ark into their residence, but later, they were taken by Gods, leaving the group with the following message, *"They should return to Babylonia, as ordained, and that the place was the land of Armenia, the land of the ancient Gods"*. He concludes: *"The vessel being stranded in Armenia, some part of it yet remains in the Coryræan mountains of Armenia and the people scrape off the bitumen, with which it had been outwardly coated, and make use of it by way of alexipharmic and amulet."*



"Noah's Ark" by Currier & Ives, hand-colored lithograph, 1874-78.

PRINT: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

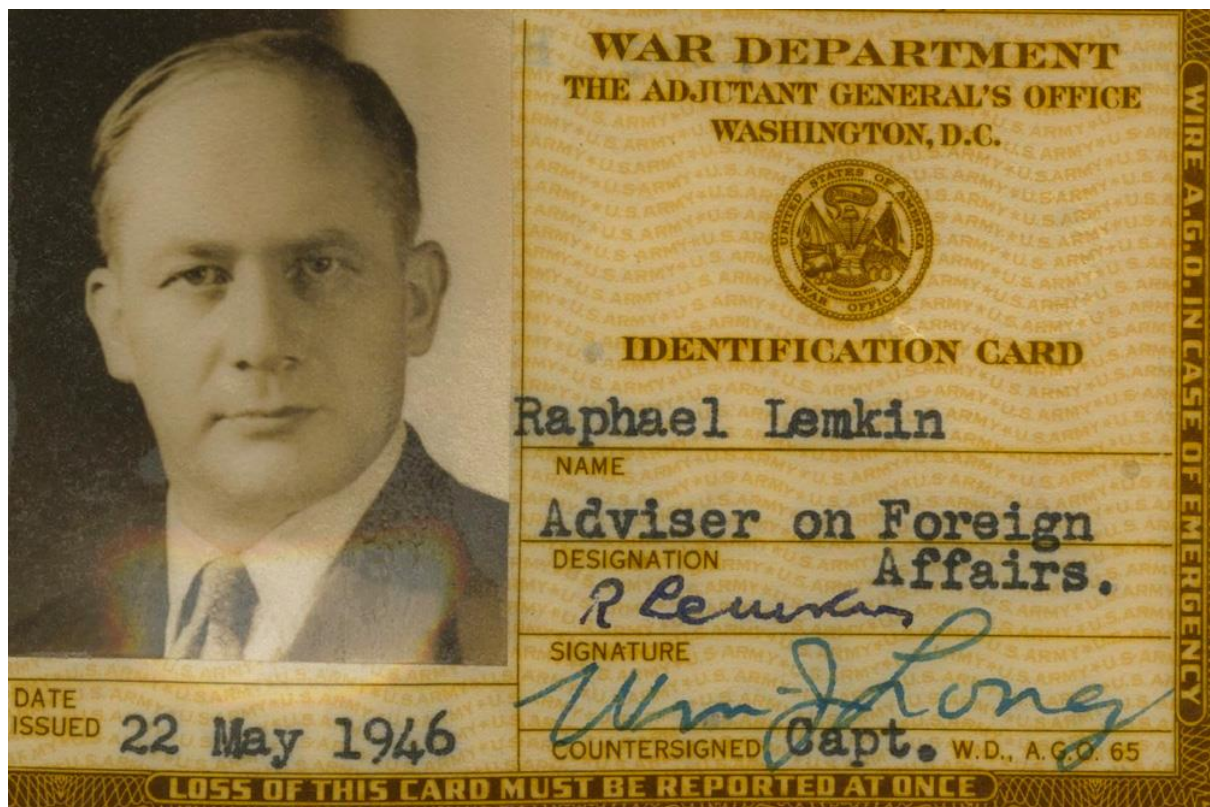
It is a tragedy of epic proportions that the place of refuge for God's threatened creations turned out to be the place where the greatest genocide against a people was carried out.

There have been five recorded 'genocides' in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:



1. Armenian genocide (1915-23)
2. Cambodian genocide (1975-79)
3. The Holocaust (1933-45)
4. Holodomor, the Ukraine (1932-33) and
5. Rwanda (April-July 1994).

Raphael Lemkin (1900 -1959), a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent coined the term 'genocide' in 1943 from *Genos* (Greek for family or race) and *Cide* (Latin for killing) after reading about the assassination of Talaat Pasha, the chief perpetrator of the Armenian Genocide. Lemkin asked his Professor Julius Makarewicz why Talaat Pasha could not have been tried for his crimes in a German court. Makarewicz supported the expulsion of the Jews and the Ukrainians from Poland. He said, the doctrine of State Sovereignty gave governments the right to conduct internal affairs as they saw fit.



Credit: Center for Jewish History

*"Consider the case of a farmer who owns a flock of chickens", he continued, "he kills them and this is his business. If you interfere, you are trespassing." Lemkin was horrified, "But the Armenians are not chickens; Sovereignty cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of innocent people".*



Twenty years later, in 1948, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide codified genocide as acts *'having intent to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group'*.

The Armenian Genocide began on 24 April 1915. Over eight years, between 1 and 1.5 million Armenians were killed.



Credit: Financial Times

The Cambodian Genocide (1975 - 1979), was carried out by the ruling Communist Party, the Khmer Rouge, under the leadership of Pol Pot; about two million (a quarter of the country's population) were killed.





Credit: BuzzFeed News

The Holocaust: Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazi regime and its collaborators murdered six million European Jews and five million non-Jews. The terms ‘Shoah’ (destruction) and ‘Holocaust’ are used to describe the extermination of Jews by the Nazis.



Credit: socialistsanddemocrats.eu



Holodomor (death by starvation), The Ukrainian Genocide: Between 1932 and 1933, about 3.5 to 7 million Ukrainians died in the man-made famine caused by the policies of Stalin.



Credit: euractiv.com

Rwanda: In 100 days between April and July 1994, one million Tutsis and Hutus were killed.



Credit: theguardian.com

Each genocide is a horror story and Rwanda is not the end of the story. Right now, genocides are being committed in at least 13 countries.

According to GenocideWatch (*We exist to predict, prevent, stop, and punish genocide and other forms of mass murder. Our purpose is to build an international movement to prevent and stop genocide*), there are ten stages of Genocide:

1. Classification 2. Symbolization 3. Discrimination 4. Dehumanization 5. Organization 6. Polarization 7. Preparation 8. Persecution 9. Extermination and 10. Denial

The ten phases can be grouped into two: Persecution and Extermination; Denial is common to all phases.

Adolf Hitler while addressing the Wehrmacht commanders at Obersalzberg on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1939 (a week before the German invasion of Poland), is reported to have said, *“Genghis Khan had millions of women and children hunted down and killed, with a gay heart. History sees him only as the great founder of the State. I have given the order that the aim of this war does not consist in reaching certain geographical lines, but in the enemies' physical elimination. Thus, I put ready my Death's Head units, with the order to kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of the Polish race or language. Only thus, will we gain the living space that we need. After all, who talks now of the extermination of the Armenians?”*



Credit: chariotjournal.wordpress.com



Adolf Hitler

“Our strength consists in our speed and in our brutality. Genghis Khan led millions of women and children to slaughter – with premeditation and a happy heart...I have issued the command—and I’ll have anybody who utters but one word of criticism executed by firing squad...**Who, after all, speaks to-day of the annihilation of the Armenians?**”

-Adolf Hitler, [Obersalzberg Speech](#), August 22, 1939

Credit: slideplayer.com



Genghis Khan, Credit: britannica.com

Yehuda Bauer, an Israeli historian says,

*"The horror of the Holocaust is not that it deviated from human norms; the horror is that it didn't. What happened may happen again, to others not necessarily Jews, perpetrated by others, not necessarily Germans. We are all possible victims, possible perpetrators, possible bystanders."*

## Genocides in 20<sup>th</sup> Century

State	Period	Number Killed in Million
China	1949-50, 1958-61, 1966-69	49-78
USSR	1932-39	23.0
Germany	1939-1945	12.0
Congo	1886-1908	8.0
Japan	1941-44	5.0
Turkey	1915-20	2.5
Cambodia	1975-79	1.7
North Korea	1948-94	1.6
Ethiopia	1975-78	1.5
Biafra	1967-1970	1.0
Afghanistan	1979-1982	0.9
Rwanda	1994	0.8
Iraq	1980-1990, 1987-88	0.6
Yugoslavia	1945-1987	0.6
Indonesia	1965-66	0.5
Japan	1937-39	0.5
Angola	1975-2002	0.4
Afghanistan	1986-2001	0.4
Uganda	1969-1979	0.3
Pakistan	1970-71	0.3
Italy	1934-45	0.3
TOTAL		116-146

According to Mount Holyoake College, Massachusetts, there have been at least twenty genocides in the 20th Century in which 110 - 140 million people have been massacred.

According to GenocideWatch, at least 13 genocides are taking place now:

### Countries where Genocides are taking place

S. N.	Country	Genocide Stage/s
1	Azerbaijan	Extermination
2	Burundi	Persecution
3	Central African Republic	Persecution, Extermination
4	China	Extermination
5	Ethiopia	Extermination
6	Iraq	Extermination
7	Myanmar	Persecution, Extermination
8	Nigeria	Persecution, Extermination
9	Somalia	Extermination
10	Sudan	Extermination
11	Syria	Extermination
12	Turkey	Extermination
13	Yemen	Extermination

Although the term ‘genocide’ is of recent origin (1943), as any student of history knows, genocide has been practiced throughout. According to Thucydides, the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War in 416 BC, ‘killed all of the adult Melian men’ Indeed, in ancient times it was common for victors in war to massacre all the men of a conquered territory and make women and children captive.



Credit: unibw.de

Professor Timothy Williams of Bundeswehr University Munich, studied 40 cases of genocide in his paper ‘Why Genocide Occurs’, published in October 2016. He identified the following conditions being conducive to genocide:



1. Political Upheaval
2. Civil War, defined as 'a contested incompatibility concerning government and/or territory involving the use of armed force
3. Ethnic Cleavage/s between the ruling elite and the deprived class/es
4. Autocratic regime
5. Exclusionary ideology
6. Economic and Political Autarky (Closed, isolated system/s)



Credit: youtube.com

While the sociological and political causes enumerated by Professor Williams are useful, the psychological causation is equally important, if not more so. As Dr. Johanna Ray Vollhardt, of Clark University (a private research university in Worcester, Massachusetts) has pointed out, a genocide does not occur due to some extraordinary psychological processes (processes that defy the logic of normal human behavior), but include many mundane, ordinary psychological phenomena that also apply in times of peace.

In other words, genocide is not a qualitatively distinct category of human behavior – it follows ordinary principles of human cognition, affect, and behavior that certain societal and political conditions (as described by Professor Williams) escalate into greater violence. This continuum of destruction often begins with seemingly harmless acts of blaming a particular group for one's misfortune or supporting its exclusion as a solution to one's problems.

The original name for Armenia was 'Hayk', after the legendary patriarch of the Armenians who is considered to be the great-great-grandson of Noah. Hayk, according to the legend, defeated the Babylonian king Bel in 2492 BC and established the Armenian nation in the Ararat region. 'Armenia' is cited in the old Persian Inscription (515 BC) as Armina. 'Armenía' and 'Armenians' are also mentioned by Hecataeus (550 BC - 476 BC), followed by Xenophon, the Greek general who described the Armenian village life around 401 BC.



Hayk, Credit: wikipedia.org

Evidence for this can be found in the work of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in the 1st century AD. Flavius Josephus writes: “the ark rested on the top of a certain mountain in Armenia. The Armenians call this place, ‘The Place of Descent’; for the ark and its remains are shown there by the inhabitants to this day. Berossus, a Hellenistic-era Babylonian priest, astronomer and writer, says, *“It is said there is still some part of this ship in Armenia, at the mountain of the Cordyaeans; and that some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away, and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischiefs.”*

Prior to the advent of Christianity, the religion in ancient Armenia was composed of a set of beliefs that gave way to Zoroastrianism from the neighboring Persia.

Christianity rapidly spread into the country after 40 AD. Tiridates III of Armenia (238–314) made Christianity the state religion in 301, making Armenia the first Christian state, 36 years before Constantine the Great was baptized!



The Etchmiadzin Cathedral, Armenia's Mother Church traditionally dated 303 AD is considered the oldest cathedral in the world. Credit: Wikipedia.org



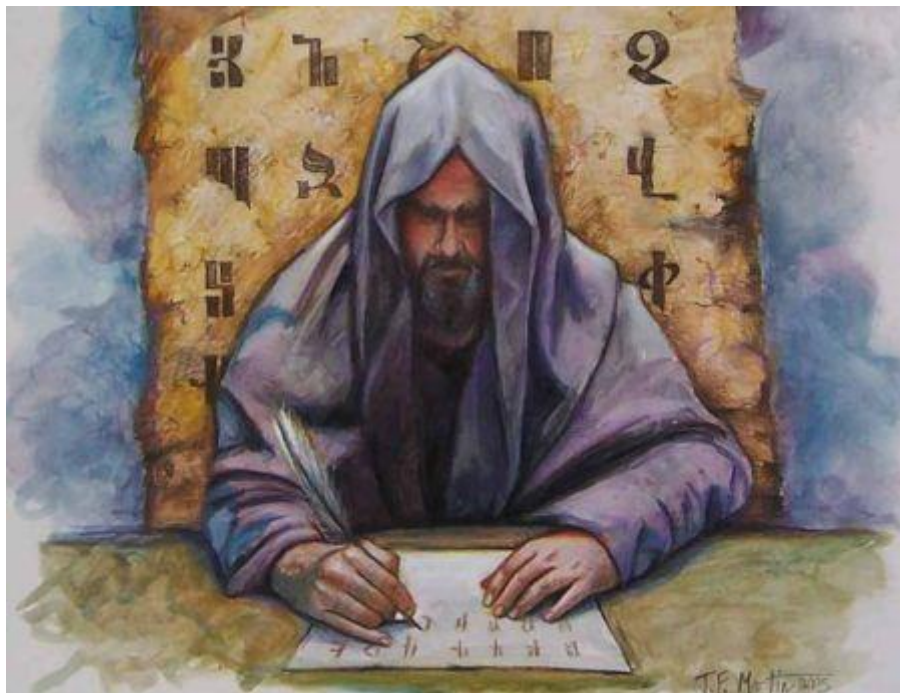


Previous page, Gregory the Illuminator, the first Patriarch of the Armenian Church

Credit: catholic.org

The legend has it that the design and the place came to St. Gregory in a vision: Christ descended to the Ararat valley and struck with a golden hammer to indicate the location of the cathedral.

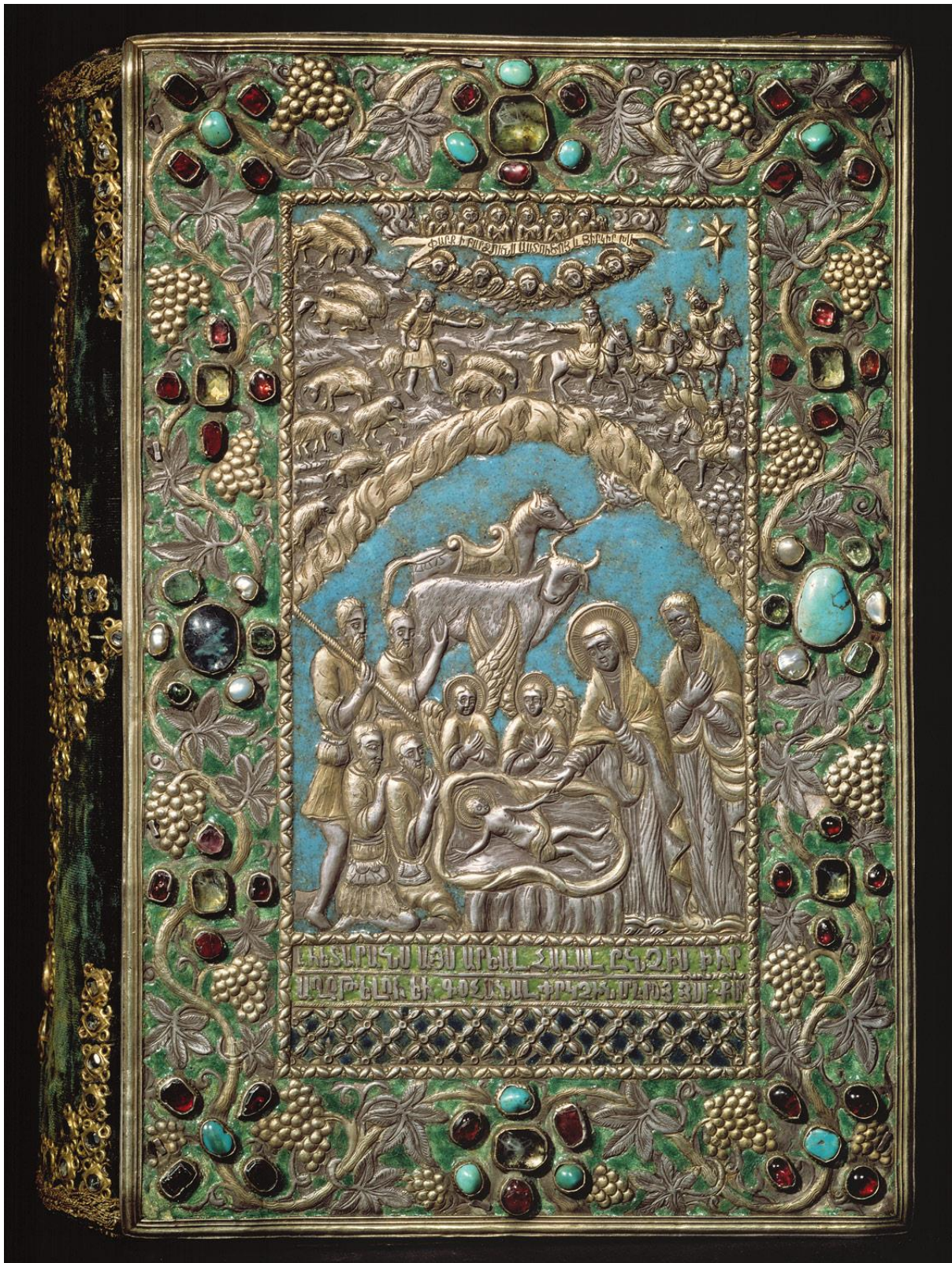
With the growth of Christianity, there was a need to revive the lost Armenian alphabet. The Masses in the Armenian churches were sung in Greek, the Royalty and nobility spoke Greek and it was also the language of instruction. The task was assigned to Mesrob Mashtots, a scholar monk, who travelled throughout Armenia and the Mediterranean world in search of the lost scriptures. In Edessa (in present day Iraq), he found some scrolls in old Armenian, and after carefully reviewing them, recreated the Armenian alphabet in 405 AD.



St. Mesrop Mashtots, Credit: iarmenia.org

In 425 AD, the Bible was translated into the Armenian language, the fifth known translation, after the Syriac, the Latin, the Coptic and the Abyssinian languages. Some scholars regard this translation, done by St. Mesrob and his disciples, as the best Bible translation ever. The French linguists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century termed it, the "Queen of translations".





Old Armenian Bible, Credit: peopleofar.com

Next page: Khotakerats' Surb Nshan manuscript, 1300 from the Holy Etchmiadzin, Treasury





Credit: christianpublishinghouse.co



While the influence of the Church was growing, the political fortunes of Armenia were on the decline. Armenia lost independence after the Battle of Avarayr war of 451 AD between the Christian Armenian army under Vardan Mamikonian and Sassanid Persian army led by Mushkan Niusalavurt.



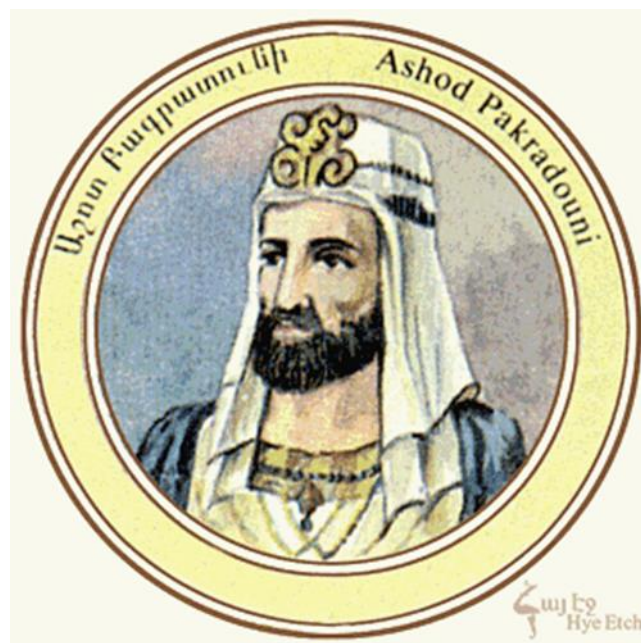
Hymnal Depicting the Battle of Avarayr, Credit: metmuseum.org



For 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, eastern Armenia was ruled by the Persian *marzpan*s (governors). Persian King Yazdegerd II tried to end Christianity in Armenia, to impose Zoroastrianism. Armenians revolted when many Persian priests were sent to Armenia to build temples and to conduct fire worship ceremonies.

By 590 AD Armenia was divided between Persia and the Byzantine Empire. The Caliphate began to expand and Egypt and Syria became Islamic countries. By 680 AD the Arabs destroyed Persian resistance and Zoroastrianism was replaced by Islam. With this, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Caliphate's policy towards Armenia and its Christian faith hardened. Ostikans (the Armenian title for the governors of the Caliphate) were appointed as the Representatives of the Caliph to govern Armenia. Although it became part of the Caliph's domain, Armenia tried to remain faithful to the Christian religion. The Ostikans failed in their persistent attempts to convert Armenians to Islam. Their defiance exasperated the Caliph and in 705 AD, he ordered the Ostikans to kill Armenian Christians. In one such move, more than 400 Armenian noblemen were trapped in one of Nakhichevan churches, the doors were closed and the church was set on fire. In 850 -851 AD, two more massacres of the Armenian people were recorded.

It took about thirty years for peace and prosperity to return to Armenia in the reign of Ashot Bagradouni, who maintained balance between the Arabs and the Greeks and was crowned the King of Armenia in 884 AD.





Previous page: Ashot Bagradouni, Credit: hayastan.com

The 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, death and destruction visited the churches in the form of the Mongol and the Turkoman invasions.



The Mongolian army in the battle of Köse Dağ in 1243, Credit: wikipedia.org



The church of St Gregory of Tigran Honents, Credit: Sara Yeomans/Flickr





The Monastery of the Hripsimian Virgins, Credit: [eggs-in-art-en.blogspot.com](http://eggs-in-art-en.blogspot.com)







Credit: Wikimedia.org



Credit: Mr. Hicks46/Flickr





Credit: Mr. Hicks46/Flickr



Credit: mirrorspectator.com

## Timeline of the Crusades

Crusade	Start	Key Details
First	1095	Pope Urban II calls on the Christians of Europe to march east to recover Jerusalem from the Muslims
Second	1147	The second crusade is led by two kings, Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany
Third	1190	A year after succeeding to the throne of England, Richard I sets off east as one of the leaders of the third crusade
Fourth	1202	The fleet of the fourth crusade called by Pope Innocent III departs from Venice
Fifth	1217	The crusade led by Andrew II of Hungary and Leopold VI of Austria and joined by John of Brienne was inconclusive
Sixth	1228	The crusade led by Frederick II resulted in the Treaty of Jaffa, the contents of which were not universally acclaimed.
Seventh	1248	This Crusade to Egypt was led by Louis IX of France. His army was defeated by the Ayyubid army led by Fakhr ad-Din ibn as-Shaikh
Eighth	1270	The crusade is considered a failure as Louis IX of France died shortly after arriving in Tunisia, his dispersing back to Europe soon afterwards
Ninth (last)	1271	Led by Lord Edward (Future King Edward I of England), the clash with Baibars was inconclusive.



The Crusades were a series of religious wars initiated, supported, and sometimes directed by the Latin Church in the medieval period. The best-known Crusades are those to the Holy Land between 1095 and 1291 to liberate Jerusalem and the surrounding area from the Islamic rule.

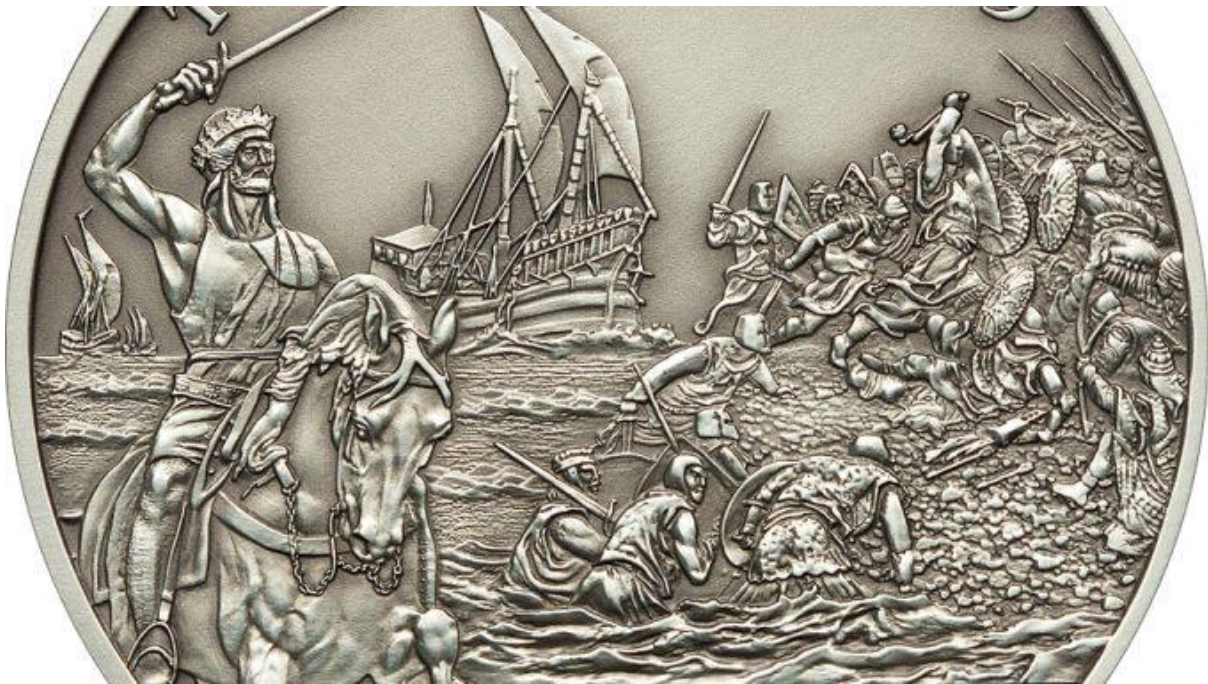


Pope Urban II orders the First Crusade, Credit: history.co.uk





Previous page: Meeting of Louis VII, King of France, and Conrad III, Emperor of Germany,  
Second Crusade, 1147–1149, Credit: lookand learn.com



3rd Crusade: Richard the Lionheart, Credit: numiscollect.eu



The Fourth Crusade: The Sack of Constantinople, Credit: worldhistory.org





The Fifth Crusade (1217–1221), Credit: Wikipedia.org



The Sixth Crusade led by Frederick II, Credit: timetoast.com

Whereas the First Crusade proclaimed by Pope Urban II in 1095, was called an ‘armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem’ and thus evoked a rousing response from the faithful, later crusades were generally conducted by organized armies, sometimes led by a king and had many objectives, not all being religious.





The Seventh Crusade led by Louis IX of France, Credit: alchetron.com



The Eighth Crusade launched by Louis IX of France, Credit: storiespreschool.com



The Ninth and the last crusade, led by Lord Edward, Credit: knightstemplarvault.com





Previous page: Reconquest of the main towns by year, Credit: Wikipedia.org

Whereas the crusades were inspired by a fundamentalist religious logic backed by military fervor, for two centuries, the *Reconquista* (reconquest) was a phenomenon under which the Christian Iberian kingdoms opposed and conquered the Muslim kingdoms, who had militarily seized territory from native Iberian Christians. The Reconquest campaign started in 711 and after almost eight centuries ended in the fall of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada in 1492.



The Surrender of Granada, by Vicente Barneto y Vazquez

Credit: wikiwand.com



In the early 15th century Armenia was divided into many small principalities. After the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Muhammad II in 1453, Armenia was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Church was thrown in disorder and a large number of Armenians migrated to Crimea, Russia, Poland and India.



The conquest of Constantinople, Credit: dailysabah.com



Sultan Muhammad II, Credit: historyonthisday.com

From the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Armenia witnessed confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and Iran. The Armenian population was a victim of their bloody conflicts for more than two centuries. Following the armistice in 1639 the territory of Armenia was split between the Ottoman Empire and Iran.



Credit: wikipedia.org

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians began to place their hopes on the Russian Power. A number of messengers were sent to the Russian czars seeking protection. The rich Armenian merchants Ichto Modovletov and Zakharia Saradarov of the Armenian Trading Company presented the Czar Alexis I Mikhailovich a golden throne adorned with precious stones in 1660. The gift was made along with the petition for tax-free trading in the Russian territory. The diamond throne had 876 diamonds and 1223 other gemstones. On the back of the throne was the Latin inscription: *"Potentissimo et invictissimo Moscovitarum Imperatori Alexio, in terris feliciter regnanti, hic thronus, summa arte et industria fabrefactus, sit futuri in coelis et perennis faustum felixque omen. Anno Domini, 1659"* ("To the most powerful and invincible Muscovy Emperor Alexis doth reign felicitously upon the earth the throne made with sumptuous art would be a token of future eternal bliss in heaven. In the Year of Our Lord. 1659").





Czar Alexis I Mikhailovich, Credit: wikimedia.org

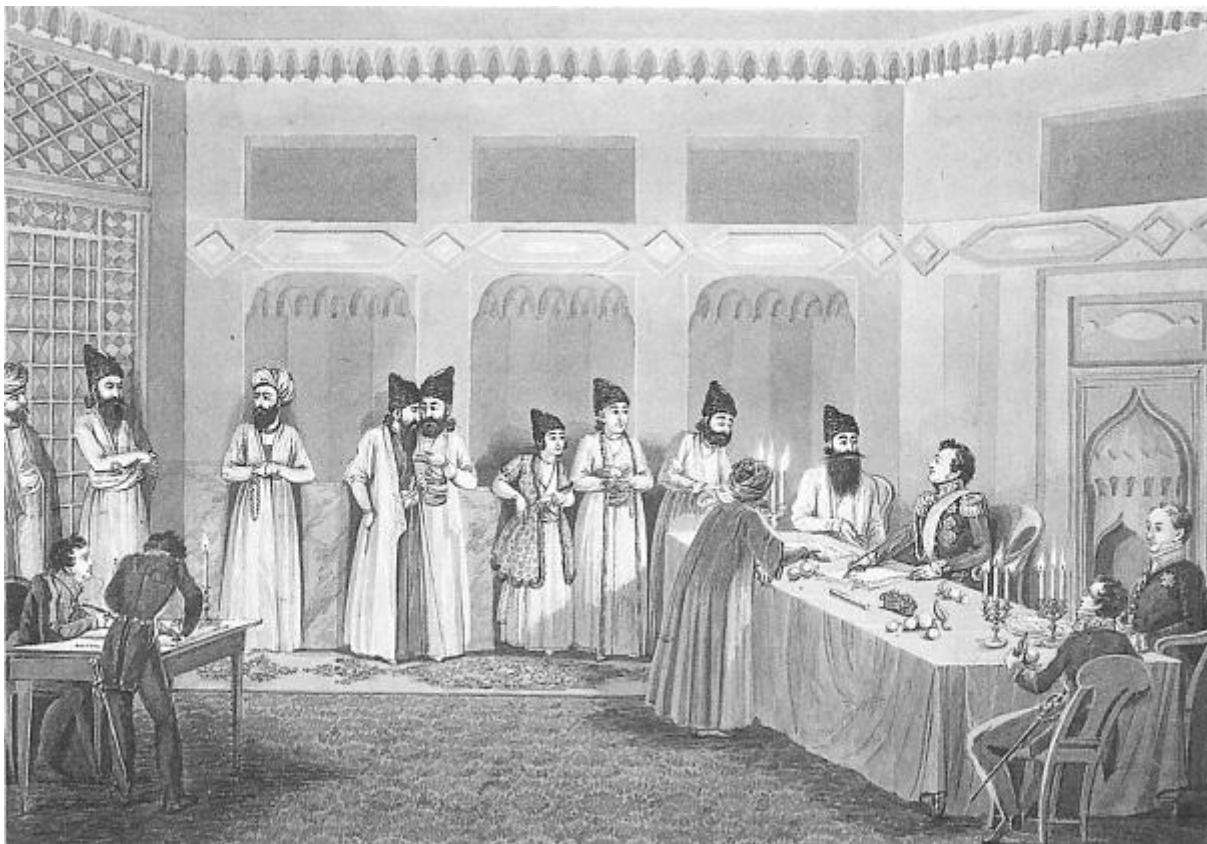


Previous page: The diamond throne presented to Czar Alexis, Credit: pinterest.com

In late 17th century, ties with Russia strengthened further. Armenia was buoyant under the reign of the Russian Empress Catherine the Great (1762-1796). As a result of the two successful wars against the Ottoman Empire, Russian annexed new territories. In 1800, neighboring Georgia became part of the Russian Empire. Under the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) Eastern Armenia became part of the Russian Empire. After the Treaty of Torkamanchay (1828), most of the Eastern Armenia came under Russian control, with a large number of Armenians moving back to Eastern Armenia from Persia.



Catherine the Great, Credit: Britannica.com



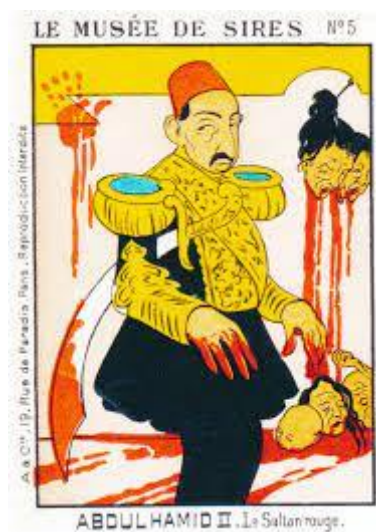
Treaty of Torkamanchay, Credit: Wikipedia.org





Abdul Hamid II, Credit: dailysabah.com

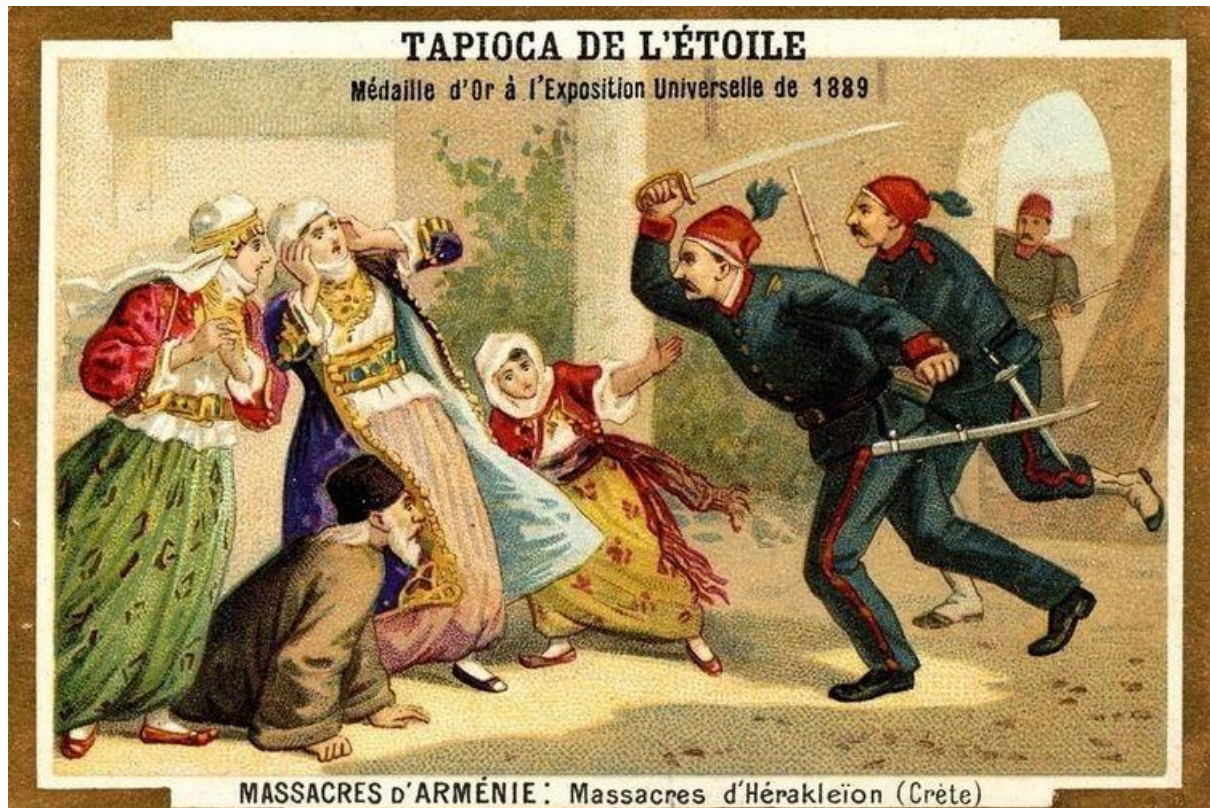
The 34<sup>th</sup> Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Abd al-Hamid II (1842 -1918) was the last Sultan to exert despotic control over his shrinking Empire. He massacred the Armenians systematically, with the press calling them the Hamidian massacres.



Credit: groong.com



The casualties were estimated between 100,000 to 300,000. Although the massacres were aimed mainly at the Armenians, in some cases, they morphed into broader anti-Christian pogroms.



Credit: alchetron.com

## MILLION ARMENIANS KILLED OR IN EXILE

American Committee on Relief  
Says Victims of Turks Are  
Steadily Increasing.

### POLICY OF EXTERMINATION

More Atrocities Detailed in Support  
of Charge That Turkey Is  
Acting Deliberately.

## TELL OF HORRORS DONE IN ARMENIA

Report of Eminent Americans  
Says They Are Unequaled  
in a Thousand Years.

### TURKISH RECORD OUTDONE

A Policy of Extermination Put  
in Effect Against a  
Helpless People.

### ENTIRE VILLAGES SCATTERED

Men and Boys Massacred, Women  
and Girls Sold as Slaves and Dis-  
tributed Among Moslems.

## PLEAS FOR ARMENIA BY GERMANY FUTILE

Kaiser's Ambassador Only Able  
to Prevent Repression in  
Constantinople.

### NO EFFECT IN PROVINCES

Infuriated by Desertion of Christian  
Soldiers to Allies, Turks Will  
Not Stop Outrages.

Previous page: Headlines from the New York Times, 1915, Credit: nytimes.com

The massacres began in the interior in 1894 and soon spread far and wide in the following years. Most of the massacres took place between 1894 and 1896, tapering off in 1897, following international condemnation.

The new opposition Party of the Young Turks rose in the Ottoman Empire in 1908. After the 'Young Turk Revolution', the Sultan became a symbolic figure and was forced to abdicate in 1909. The Young Turks continued his policy of oppressing the Armenians and in the bloody attacks on Adana and Cilicia, where the Turkish mobs were supported by the army, 35,000 Armenians were killed.



Credit: twitter.com



In 1913, a coup d'etat within the ruling Union and Progress Committee party brought the triumvirate of Enver, Talaat and Gemal Pasha to power. The racist doctrines of Pan-Turkism, national exclusiveness and creation of a homogeneous state were adopted by the party. Armenians were denounced as superfluous and dangerous elements inside the Empire. Armenian bankers were accused of "looting the country" and the intelligentsia was blamed of undermining the State.

John Kifner writing in the New York Times summarized the Armenian Genocide of 1915, thus:

On the eve of World War I, there were two million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. By 1922, there were fewer than 400,000. The others, some 1.5 million, were killed in the genocide. He cites, David Fromkin (author of the widely praised history of World War I and its aftermath, 'A Peace to End All Peace'): *"Rape and beating were commonplace. Those who were not killed at once, were driven through mountains and deserts without food, drink or shelter. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians eventually succumbed or were killed."*



Credit: wikipedia.org

The Armenian Genocide started on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1915. The Armenians commemorate it, as on this date, more than 200 Armenian intellectuals and leaders were arrested and killed in Istanbul. The Armenian soldiers serving in the Turkish army were disarmed and then killed. In all major towns and cities, the Armenian shops and business establishments were looted under the pretext of ‘war contributions.’ In November 2014, Russia declared war on Turkey and in return, Turkey proclaimed Jihad in all provinces. In March 1915, the call to exterminate all Armenians throughout the Ottoman Empire was issued by the Ittihad committee of the Party of the Young Turks. In October 1916, the German Ambassador Wilhelm Radowitz reported to his foreign ministry that out of the two and a half million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before the genocide, only 300 000 survived, the rest were deported and massacred.

Ambassador Morgenthau's Story (1918) is the title of the published memoirs of Henry Morgenthau Sr., the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916. The book was dedicated to the then U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

The book is a primary source regarding the Armenian genocide and the Greek genocide during the last years of the Ottoman Empire.

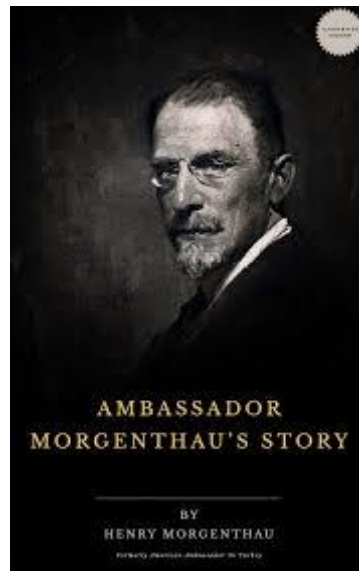
The First-Person account of Ambassador Morgenthau faithfully records gory details of the abominable tragedy of the Armenian genocide, as it was unravelling, while the European powers were in denial. A sample of this gruesome history:

## CHAPTER XXIV THE MURDER OF A NATION

*In the early part of 1915, every Turkish city contained thousands of Armenians who had been trained as soldiers and who were supplied with rifles, pistols, and other weapons of defence. The operations at Van once more disclosed that these men could use their weapons to good advantage. It was thus apparent that if the plan of murdering a race were to succeed, it would be necessary to render all Armenian soldiers powerless and the Armenians in every city and town had to be deprived of their weapons. Before Armenia could be slaughtered, Armenia must be made defenceless.*

*Sultan Abd al-Hamid II known as the "Red Sultan" and stigmatized by Gladstone as 'the great assassin' devised his state policy to solve the Armenian problem by murdering the entire race. The fear of England, France, Russia, and America, was the only thing that restrained him from accomplishing this task. His successors, Talaat and Enver, however, have no such fear and have successfully carried out his programme. I do not believe that the darkest ages ever presented scenes*

*more horrible than those which now took place all over Turkey. Nothing was sacred to the Turkish gendarmes; they ransacked churches, treated the altars and sacred utensils with the utmost indignity, and even held mock ceremonies in imitation of the Christian sacraments. They would beat the priests into insensibility, under the pretence that they were the centres of sedition.'*



Morgenthau with his children, Credit: [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org)



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# AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY

BY  
HENRY MORGENTHAU

*Formerly American Ambassador to Turkey*



ILLUSTRATED

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GARDEN CITY      NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY  
1919

Pub. in U.K. under title: Secrets of the Bosphorus,  
London: Hutchinson & Co., 1918.

Ambassador Morgenthau's Story (1918) is the title of the published memoirs of Henry Morgenthau Sr., the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916. The book was dedicated to the then U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. The book is a primary source for the Armenian and the Greek genocides during the last years of the Ottoman Empire.

The First-Person account of Ambassador Morgenthau faithfully records gory details of the abominable tragedy of the Armenian genocide, as it was unravelling, while the European powers were in denial. A sample of this gruesome history:

*'As a preliminary to the searches everywhere, the strong men of the villages and towns were arrested and taken to prison. Their tormentors here would exercise the most diabolical ingenuity in their attempts to make their victims declare themselves to be 'revolutionists' and to tell the hiding places of their arms. The examination would then begin with the bastinado, a form of torture consisting of beating the soles of the feet with a thin rod. At first the pain is not marked; but as the process goes slowly on, it develops into the most terrible agony, the feet swell and burst, and often they have to be amputated. If this did not succeed in bringing their victim to terms, they would pull out his eyebrows and beard almost hair by hair; they would extract his finger nails and toe nails; they would apply red-hot irons to his breast, tear off his flesh with red-hot pincers, and then pour boiled butter into the wounds. In some cases, the gendarmes would nail hands and feet to pieces of wood - evidently in imitation of the Crucifixion and then, they would cry: "Now let your Christ come and help you!"'*

His discussions with the Turkish Government officials were brutally frank:

*'One day I was discussing these proceedings with a responsible Turkish official, who was describing the tortures inflicted. He made no secret of the fact that the Government had instigated them and like all Turks of the official classes, he enthusiastically approved this treatment of the detested race. This official told me that all these details were matters of nightly discussion at the headquarters of the Union and Progress Committee. Each new method of inflicting pain was hailed as a splendid discovery, and the regular attendants were constantly ransacking their brains in the effort to devise some new torment. He told me that they even delved into the records of the Spanish Inquisition and other historic institutions of torture and adopted all the suggestions found there. He did not tell me who carried off the prize in this gruesome competition, but common reputation throughout Armenia gave a preeminent infamy to Djevdet Bey, the Vali of Van, whose activities in that section I have already described. All through this country Djevdet was generally known as the "horseshoer of Bashkale" for this connoisseur in torture had invented what was perhaps the masterpiece of all - that of nailing horseshoes to the feet of his Armenian victims.'*

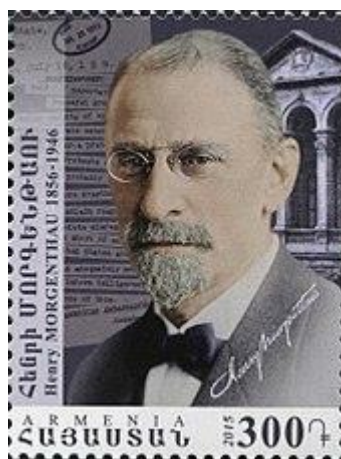
His denunciation of the horrid past of the Ottoman Empire was eloquent:

*'I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared with the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915. In the slaughter of the Albigenses in the early part of*

*the 13<sup>th</sup> century about 60,000 people were killed. In the massacre of St. Bartholomew about 30,000 human beings lost their lives. The Sicilian Vespers, which has always figured as one of the most fiendish outbursts of this kind, caused the destruction of 8,000. Volumes have been written about the Spanish Inquisition under Torquemada, yet in the eighteen years of his administration about 8,000 heretics were done to death. Perhaps the one event in history that most resembles the Armenian deportations was the expulsion of the Jews from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella. According to Prescott 160,000 were uprooted from their homes and scattered broadcast over Africa and Europe. Yet all these previous persecutions seem almost trivial when we compare them with the sufferings of the Armenians, in which at least 600,000 people were destroyed and perhaps as many as 1,000,000. These massacres were the products of religious fanaticism, but the men who conceived the crimes against the Armenians were atheists, with no more respect for Islam than for Christianity and their only motive was cold-blooded, murderous State Policy.'*

Ambassador Morgenthau knew well that the Armenians were not the only victims of this murderous State Policy, that it was first tested successfully on the Greeks:

*The Armenians are not the only subject people in Turkey which have suffered from this policy of making Turkey exclusively the country of the Turks. It's the same story with the Greeks and the Syrians. In the few months preceding the European War, the Ottoman Government began deporting its Greek subjects along the coast of Asia Minor and in the space of three or four months more than 100,000 Greeks were taken from their age-long homes in the Mediterranean and removed to the interior. In fact, Bedri Bey, the Prefect of Police at Constantinople, told one of my secretaries that the Turks had expelled the Greeks so successfully that they had decided to apply the same method to all other races in the Empire.*



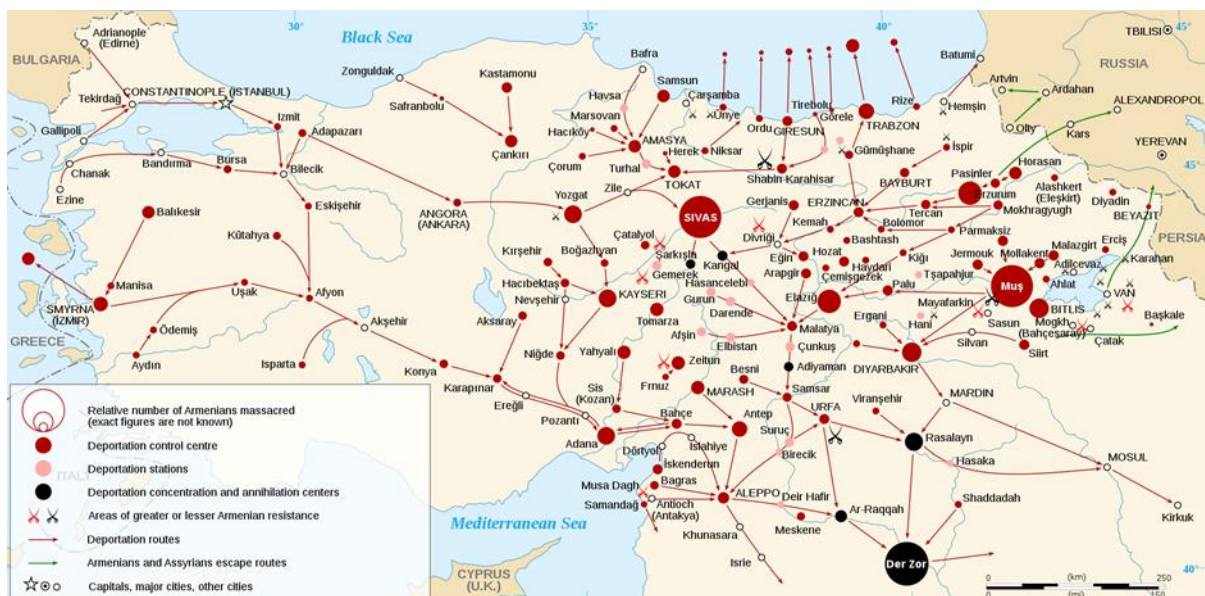
Morgenthau on a 2015 Armenian stamp from the series "Centennial of the Armenian Genocide". In the background is the telegram pictured above, Credit: wikipedia.org



Leslie A. Davis, the US Consul to Harput, from 1914 to 1917 was a witness to the genocide. He saw how large clusters of Armenian populations, who were being deported from provinces outside Harput to Syria, were rerouted to Harput *"only to be butchered in this province. The mass deportations ordered by the Turks, in which hundreds of thousands of Armenians were crammed into freight cars and shipped hundreds of miles to die in the desert or at the hands of killing squads, were far worse than a straightforward massacre, he wrote. "In a massacre many escape, but a wholesale deportation of this kind in this country means a longer and perhaps even more dreadful death for nearly everyone."*

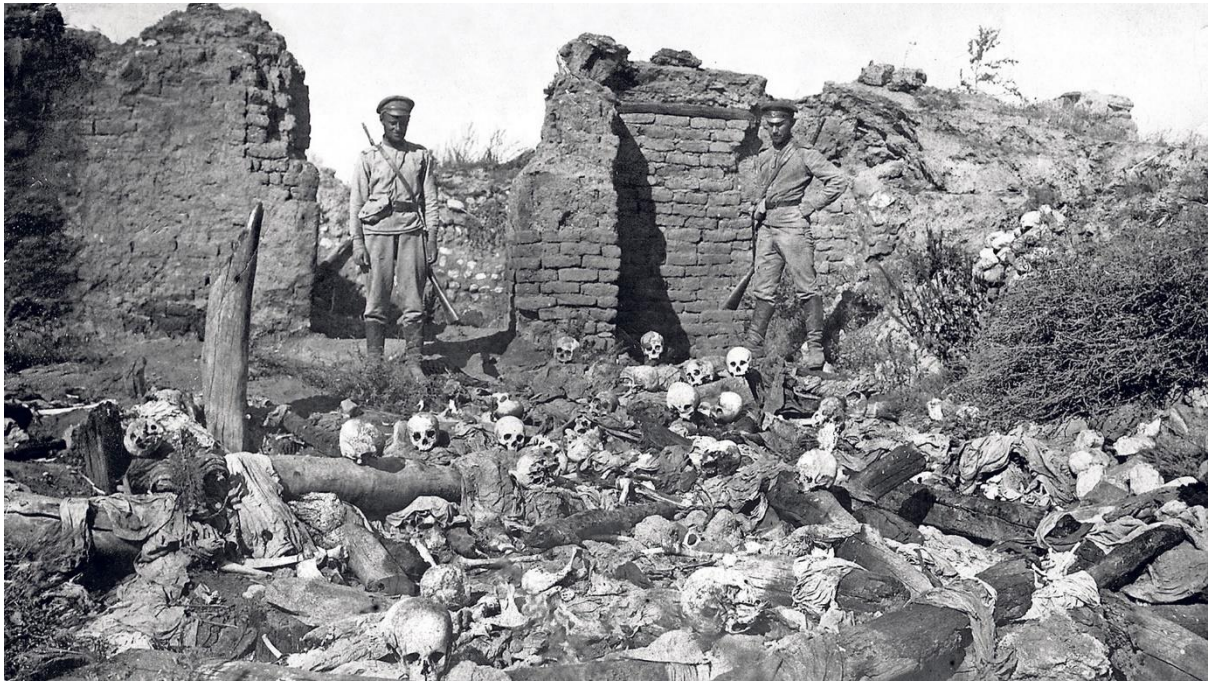


Leslie Davis, Credit: wikipedia.org



Map of the Armenian genocide in 1915

The Ottoman gazette gave a figure of 800,000 Armenians killed between 1915 and 1918. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, during a conversation with Major General Harbord, the Chief of the American Military Mission to Armenia, quoted the same figure in September 1919. This figure of 800,000 excludes the Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman army liquidated in the early stages of the genocide, as well as the number of women and children 'assimilated' into Turkish families.



Credit: Wikipedia.org



Credit: Wikipedia.org





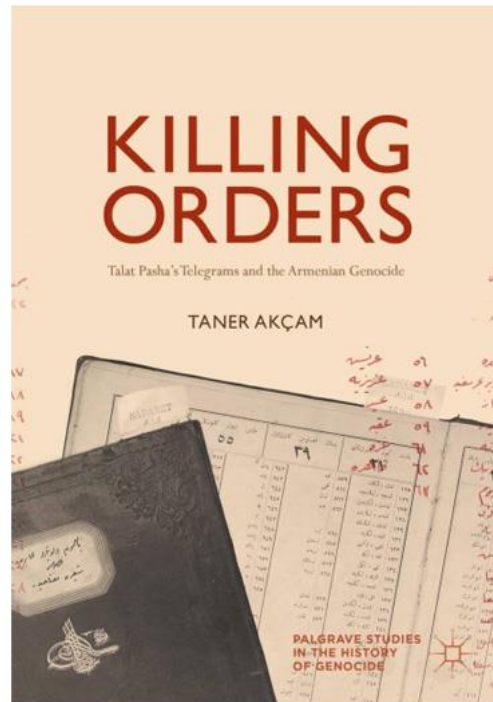
Credit: youtube.com

According to the records of Talaat Pasha, more than 970,000 Armenians 'disappeared' from the Ottoman official files in 1915-1916. In 1983, Talaat's widow, Hayriye Talaat Bafra, gave his records to Turkish journalist Murat Bardakçı, who published them in a book titled, 'The Remaining Documents of Talat Pasha' (also known as 'Talat Pasha's Black Book'). According to the 'Black Book', the number of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire before 1915 was 1,256,000. However, he himself believed that this number under-estimated the Armenian population by thirty percent (the real number would be a little over 1.6 million). Further, this number did not account for the Protestant Armenians. According to historian Ara Sarafian, the population of Armenians should have been approximately 1.7 million before the war. That number plunged to 284,157 two years later in 1917.

**Talat Pasha's Black Book documents his**  
Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1917, according to Talat Pasha's Black Book

Province	Before 1915	After 1915	Decrease	Percentage	Notes
Adana	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Antep	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Diyarbakir	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Erzurum	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Harput	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Malatya	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Mardin	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Siirt	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Van	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Bitlis	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Agri	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Erzincan	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
Erzurum	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%	
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Credit: clarku.edu

A report dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 1916 of the German Foreign Office Intelligence Director Erzberger stated that 1.5 million Armenians were killed during the War. The report of Germany's Ambassador to Turkey, Radowitz dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 1916 repeated the same number.

The subject of the Armenian genocide has become greatly politicized. In a world swayed by narrative rather than facts, the truth in peace, as well as in war, is the first casualty!

The Armenian Genocide, like the Jewish Holocaust, has grown in significance over the decades. But whereas, the Jewish intellectuals and social media influencers have successfully created and strengthened the Holocaust identity, the Armenians have not done so/not been able to do so.

Every 24<sup>th</sup> April, since 1994, the U.S. President has delivered a homily honoring the deaths of one and a half million people of Armenian ancestry, without uttering the 'G-word'. It has always been an exercise in 'linguistic realpolitik' because of vociferous objections from Turkey.

Joe Biden overturned decades of the US policy, when he recognized the 1915 Armenian Genocide on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021, using the G-word, but with a lot of

diplomatic finesse. *“We affirm the history,”* he said, *“not to cast blame but to ensure that what happened is never repeated.”*



Credit: youtube.com

The US recognition came five years after the Bundestag passed a resolution in June 2016, calling the massacre a genocide and apologizing for German government’s complicity with the Ottomans Empire. The U.S. is now among 30-odd countries, including France, Germany and Canada, that have formally recognized the Armenian genocide; India, the U.K. and Israel, have not.

The modern history of Armenia covers a hundred years, from the establishment of the First Republic of Armenia (1918–1920) to present. Although the Russian Army and Armenian militia succeeded in gaining most of the Ottoman Armenia during the World War I, their gains were lost with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Russian-controlled Eastern Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan attempted to form the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic, which lasted four months (February to May 1918), when it was dissolved. The Eastern Armenia declared independence on 28 May 1918 as the First Republic of Armenia.



Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic 1918

Credit: Wikipedia.org

The First Republic's short-lived independence was fraught with war, territorial disputes, and a mass influx of refugees from the Ottoman-ruled Western Armenia, bringing starvation and disease.

At the end of the World War I, the victorious powers sought to divide up the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Sèvres of 10<sup>th</sup> August 1920, promised to maintain the existence of the Armenian republic and to attach the former territories of the Ottoman-ruled Armenia to it. Because the new borders of Armenia were to be drawn by the U S President Woodrow Wilson, the Ottoman Armenia was referred to as the 'Wilsonian Armenia'.



Credit: edmaps.com

In 1920, the Turkish nationalist forces invaded the fledgling Armenian Republic from the east. The Turkish forces captured Armenian territories that Russia had annexed in the 1877–1878 Russo-Turkish War. The resultant Treaty of Alexandropol of 2 December 1920 forced Armenia to disarm its military forces, and cede all the Ottoman territory given to it by the Treaty of Sèvres.

Armenia got annexed by the Soviet Red Army, along with Georgia and Azerbaijan and was merged into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as part of the TSFSR



(Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic) on 4 March 1922. The TSFSR lasted from 1922 to 1936, when it was divided up into three separate entities (Armenian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, and Georgian SSR).



Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, Credit: wikipedia.org

Armenians enjoyed a period of relative stability within the USSR. They received medicine, food, and other provisions from Moscow and the Communist rule proved peaceful in contrast to the traumatic final years of the Ottoman Empire. The situation, however, was difficult for the Church, which struggled with the anti-religious Communist policies.

Although Armenia was not the scene of any battles in World War II, an estimated 500,000 Armenians (nearly a third of the population) fought in the War in which about 175,000 died.

With the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953 and the emergence of Khrushchev as the General Secretary of the CPSU, life in Armenia and the Church affairs improved.

During the Gorbachev era of the 1980s, tensions developed between Azerbaijan and its autonomous district of Nagorno-Karabakh, a majority Armenian region. The Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh demanded unification with Armenia and their protests were met with force, resulting in anti-Azerbaijani violence in Armenia. Gorbachev's inability to meet Armenia's aspirations disillusioned the masses and led to the demand for independence. In May 1990, the New Armenian Army (NAA) was established, as a defence force separate from the Soviet Army. The continued Azerbaijani repression of the Armenians living there, forced the 200,000-strong community in Baku to flee to Armenia. In retaliation, Armenia declared independence on 23 August 1990.

On 21 September 1991, Armenia officially declared its statehood. Levon Ter-Petrosyan was elected the first President of the Independent Republic of Armenia on 16 October 1991. On 26 December 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist and

Armenia's independence was recognized. The initial post-Soviet years were marred by economic difficulties, with economic blockade by Azerbaijan and Turkey. The Karabakh war ended after a Russian-brokered cease-fire was put in place in 1994. Armenia got 16% of Azerbaijan's territory including Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenian forces remained in control of that territory until 2020. By the time Azerbaijan and Armenia agreed to a ceasefire in 1994, almost 30,000 people had been killed and over a million had been displaced.



The simmering, decades-long conflict erupted on 27th September 2020. Skirmishes between the two had been a regular feature for decades, along the front lines of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is internationally recognized as a part of Azerbaijan but is home to a large number of Armenians. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan suffered heavy military and civilian casualties. Turkey's intervention on the side of the fellow-Muslim country, Azerbaijan forced Armenia's hand into signing the ceasefire agreement in widely seen as its defeat.



Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Credit: wikipedia.org



The Economist

The Russia-brokered peace deal signed on 9 November 2020 by President Putin of Russia, President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia



called for Armenian army's withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh and its replacement by Russian peacekeepers. It also allowed Azerbaijan to keep a part of the territory it had captured, but left the capital of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Stepanakert, under Armenian control, protected by Russian peacekeepers.



President Aliyev of Azerbaijan, President Putin of Russia and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, Credit: ipis.ir

The deal has made Armenia reliant on Russia for security, thereby weakening its independence. Protests erupted in Armenia, demonstrators expressing anger at the agreement and questioning whether the Pashinyan government should remain in power to enforce it. But the snap election results announced on 21 June 2021 showed that Armenian voters were willing to accept the agreement.

Azerbaijan too had to compromise, nearly 2,000 Russian troops are now stationed there, as peacekeepers. That gives Moscow a military foothold just north of Iran putting Russian troops in an area of what has been an intractable ethnic conflict.

Russia has got Armenia in its sphere of influence again and Turkey has got a foothold in the South Caucasus, with its military officials at the Command Centre in Azerbaijan.

*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*

'Genocide' has not received as much attention of philosophers, as Socrates or Descartes would have liked. This is perhaps because of the numbing experience of

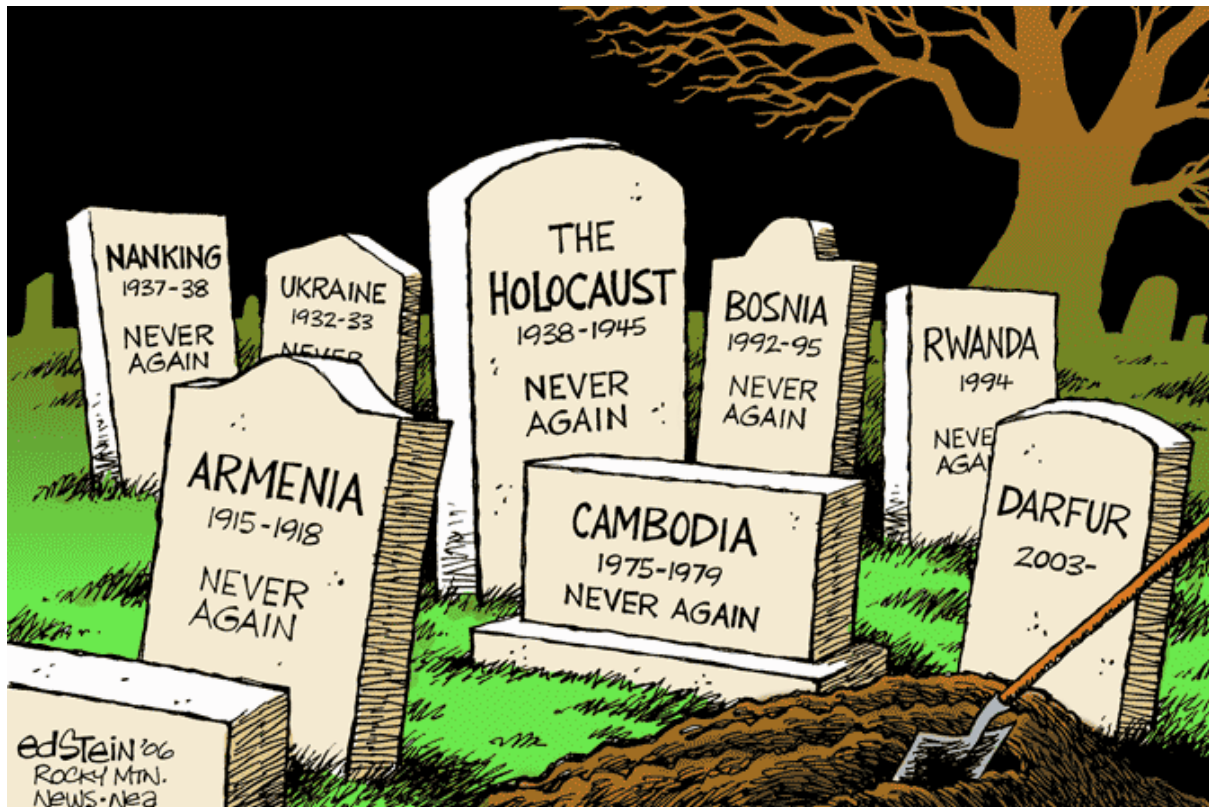
the past and present genocides coupled with political expediency. Political scientists who have studied it, mostly view Genocide as a fall-out of domestic politics, which gains international significance when the violations of international law become media stories.

Genocide has been used as an instrument of state policy, since the dawn of our civilization. There cannot be a better example of this than Adolf Hitler referring Genghis Khan to the Wehrmacht commanders at Obersalzberg on 22 August 1939, a week before invading Poland.



Credit: reddit.com

The fact that despite hundreds of millions of people having been killed in dozens of genocides in scores of countries in the last century and more than a dozen genocides are still raging, it should be a matter of great immediate and global concern, but it is not.



Credit: genocidewatch.com

This is because there is a great fatigue in the international bodies and within great powers leading to inaction. President Clinton admitted in a TV interview on 13th March 2013, “we could have saved 300,000 lives in Rwanda, if the US had gone in sooner”. In similar vein, French Prime Minister Macron sought forgiveness for France’s inaction in Rwanda, on 27th May 2021.





Previous page, Credit: abcnews.com



Credit: digismak.com

Expressing regret or seeking forgiveness *post facto*, is easy and good politics, but the truth is that even great powers have limitations, when and where interventions are required. They also understand that their own actions in similar cases in the past have hardly been beyond reproach. ‘Kill them to save us’ is a genocide cry that their people have often given in the past.



The Shocking Savagery of America’s Early History, Credit: smithsonianmag.com

Armenian genocide is an epic tragedy. All genocides are abominable, but the two that stand out for utmost cruelty as a result of relentless persecution are the ones

which were unleashed with great fury on the Jews and the Armenians. The sheer scale and magnitude, in terms of time, space, people and destruction of their cultures are simply horrifying and deeply depressing.

In case of the Jewish genocide, it was inflicted and/or countenanced by their brethren of the Book. In case of the Armenian genocide, it is incomprehensible that their own ‘brothers of the faith’ maintained studied silence, when they were being murdered by the butchers of the Ottoman empire!

As Ambassador Morgenthau feelingly wrote about the unspeakable horrors of the Armenian tragedy, *“Undoubtedly, religious fanaticism was an impelling motive with the Turkish and the Kurdish rabble who slew Armenians as a service to Allah, but the men who really conceived the crime had no such motive. Practically all of them were atheists, with no more respect for Mohammedanism than for Christianity, and with them the one motive was cold-blooded, calculating state policy.”*

There are 193 members of the UN, 56 Islamic and 137 non-Islamic. Of the 137 non-Islamic members, only 30 countries have acknowledged the horrific reality of the Armenian genocide.



Plaque at Ghent University's library, Credit: Belgian archives

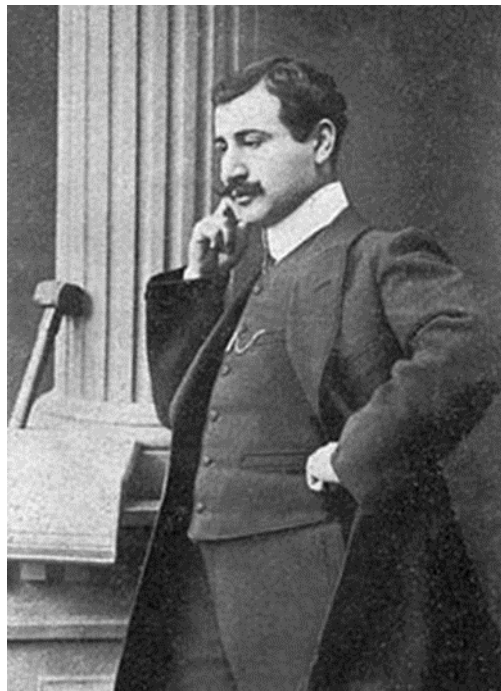


Mother's Hands Monument in memory, Credit: varoujan.net

Daniel Varoujan (1884 –1915) the internationally acclaimed Armenian poet was shot dead by the Turkish police when he was 31. His poignant poem on Armenian genocide conveys great sadness and futility:



*What is the red liquid?*  
*Flowing through the bodies of people and animals?*  
*We should let doctors decide*  
*If a bleeding person feels real pain or not.*  
*History is a pristine mummy of someone who bled to death.*  
*Statistics don't lie, but they also don't feel.*  
*What is killing people because you hate who they are?*  
*We should let history decide,*  
*If the massacre of Armenians is genocide or not.*  
*Blood is an extinct history,*  
*Faithfully written by losers.*  
*Honest pain exaggerates facts,*  
*But its humanity never shuns the truth!*



Daniel Varoujan

Credit: Wikipedia.org

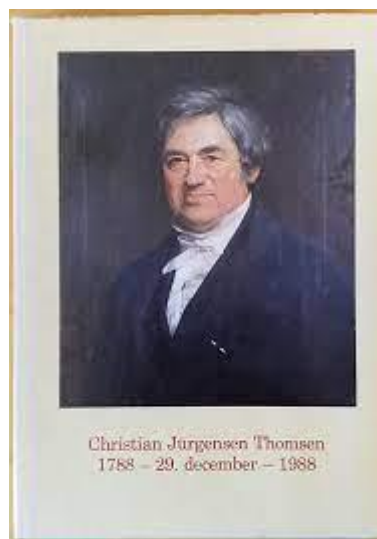
## Egypt: Old Pharaohs and New

## Egypt: Old Pharaohs and New

Humans have inhabited the planet earth for about 2 million years. They migrated from Africa into Asia and later moved into Europe, about a million years ago. The Americas were discovered the last, about 30,000 years ago.

The recorded history of mankind covers only the last 5000 years. Ancient history starts at about 3000 BC.

According to the HYDE (History Database of the Global Environment) estimates, global population in 10000 BC was about 2 million, rising to 45 million by 3,000 BC (We are 8 billion today!).



Credit: galata.co.uk

The widely accepted three-age system periodizes human pre-history (with some overlap) as follows: The Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. The practitioners of this approach believe that events of late pre-history and early history can be broadly categorized thus, to give a logical chronology. Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865), Director of the Royal Museum of Nordic Antiquities, Copenhagen, developed this system to chronologically categorize the Museum's collection. Thomsen greatly influenced the historians in Scandinavia and (after his work '*Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed*' was published in English in 1848), the historians and archaeologists in Great Britain and America, as well.



The Stone Age: The consensus is that the Stone Age started about 2 million years ago, ending around 3300 BC, with the beginning of manufacture of bronze items for household and war.

The Bronze Age: c 3300-1200 BC

The manufacture of bronze is one of the first recognisable industrial processes requiring systematic procedures for mining and smelting of tin and addition of molten copper.

The Iron Age: c 1200 BC-100 AD

Beyond swords, daggers, lanceheads and spearheads made for the militia, in Iron Age ferrous metals were also used in the agriculture and construction sectors, for chains, ploughs, scythes, hammers and saws.

These are the ten Cradles of Human Civilization:

1. The Mesopotamian ('Land Between Rivers') Civilization: 3500 BC–500 BC

Current Location: Iraq, Syria, and Turkey

Mesopotamia is the first place where civilized society evolved. It was somewhere around 8000 BC that people realized the 'value' of agriculture and started to domesticate animals for security, food and farming.

2. The Indus Valley Civilization: 3300 BC–1900 BC

Current Location: Northeast Afghanistan, Pakistan, Northwest and Western India

Almost as old as the Mesopotamian civilization, the Indus civilization covered a huge area of about 800,000 square kilometres. The Harappan and the Mohenjo-Daro civilizations, as they are called, after the excavation sites, saw the peak between 2600 BC to around 1900 BC.

The cities in this civilization were noted for town planning, baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, clusters of large commercial buildings, and the use of new techniques employed in handicraft and metallurgy (copper, bronze, lead, and tin).

Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa had populations of 30,000 to 60,000, and the Indus Valley Civilization during its peak may have been inhabited by up to five million people. The people of the Indus civilization displayed mastery in mathematics and sciences and based on the analysis of the excavated artifacts, it is evident that the culture was rich in arts and crafts.



Archaeological discoveries suggest that trade routes between the Mesopotamian and the Indus Valley Civilization were active during the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC



Ten Indus characters from the northern gate of Dholavira, Credit: Harappa.com

### 3. The Egyptian Civilization: 3150 BC–30 BC

The civilization developed around 3150 BC with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the first pharaoh.

The history of ancient Egypt can be divided into three periods: The Old Kingdom of the Early Bronze Age, the Middle Kingdom of the Middle Bronze Age and the New Kingdom of the Late Bronze Age.

Ancient Egypt gave us not just the the pyramids and the mummies that preserve the ancient pharaohs to this day, but the quarrying, surveying and construction techniques that supported the building of monumental pyramids, temples and

obelisks; a system of mathematics, a practical and effective system of medicine, irrigation systems, agriculture techniques, planked boats, ceramic and glass technology, new forms of literature, and finally, the earliest known peace treaty (with the Hittites).

### Ten Great Civilizations

S N	Period	Civilization
1	3500-500 BC	Mesopotamian
2	3300-500 BC	Indus Valley
3	3150-30 BC	Egyptian
4	2700-479 BC	Greek
5	2600 BC–900 AD	Mayan
6	1600 BC–581 AD	Chinese
7	730 BC –640 AD	Persian
8	600 BC -600 AD	Roman
9	1345-1521 AD	Aztec
10	1438-1532 AD	Incan

There are two ways to understand history: archaeology and source texts. Most of the ancient history has come to us from the accounts of historians of the various



periods. Some of the greatest historians of all time are: Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch, Sima Qian, Tacitus, Ptolemy, Al Biruni, Kalhana, Hemchandra.

### Important Periods in the History of Egypt

SN	Period	Duration
1	Pre-historic	Pre-3150 BC
2	Early Dynasties	3150 – 2686 BC
3	Old Kingdom	2686 – 2181 BC
4	Middle Kingdom	2181 – 1550 BC
5	New Kingdom	1550 – 1069 BC
6	Intermediate	1069 – 332 BC
7	Argead Dynasty	332 – 310 BC
8	Ptolemaic Dynasty	310 – 30 BC
9	Roman and Byzantine	30 BC – 641 A D
10	Mediaeval	641 – 1250
11	Mamluk Dynasties	1250 – 1517
12	Ottoman	1517 – 1867
13	French Occupation	1798 – 1801
14	Muhammad Ali Dynasty	1805 – 1953
15	British Occupation	1882 - 1922
16	Monarchy	1922 - 1953
17	Republic	1953 – To date

## Egyptian Dynasties and Pharaohs

SN	Dynasty	Period BC	Pharaohs
1	First	3100-2890	10
2	Second	2890-2686	11
3	Third	2686-2613	5
4	Fourth	2613-2496	8
5	Fifth	2496-2345	8
6	Sixth	2345-2181	8
7	Seventh & eighth	2181-2160	16
8	Ninth	2160-2130	18
9	Tenth	2130-2040	4
10	Eleventh	2134-1991	6
11	Twelfth	1991-1802	8
12	Thirteenth	1802-1649	61
13	Fourteenth	1710-1650	27
14	Fifteenth	1674-1535	10
15	Sixteenth	1650-1580	14
16	Seventeenth	1650-1550	9
17	Eighteenth	1550-1292	15
18	Nineteenth	1292-1186	8
19	Twentieth	1190-1077	10
20	Twenty-first	1069-943	7
21	Twenty-second	943-728	12
22	Twenty-third	837-735	9
23	Twenty-fourth	732-720	2
24	Twenty-fifth	744-656	5
25	Twenty-sixth	664-525	9
26	Twenty-seventh	525-404	11
27	Twenty-eighth	404-398	1
28	Twenty-ninth	398-380	5
29	Thirtieth	380-343	3
30	Thirty-first	343-332	4
31	Argead	332-309	3
32	Ptolemaic	305-30 BC	32
	Total		359

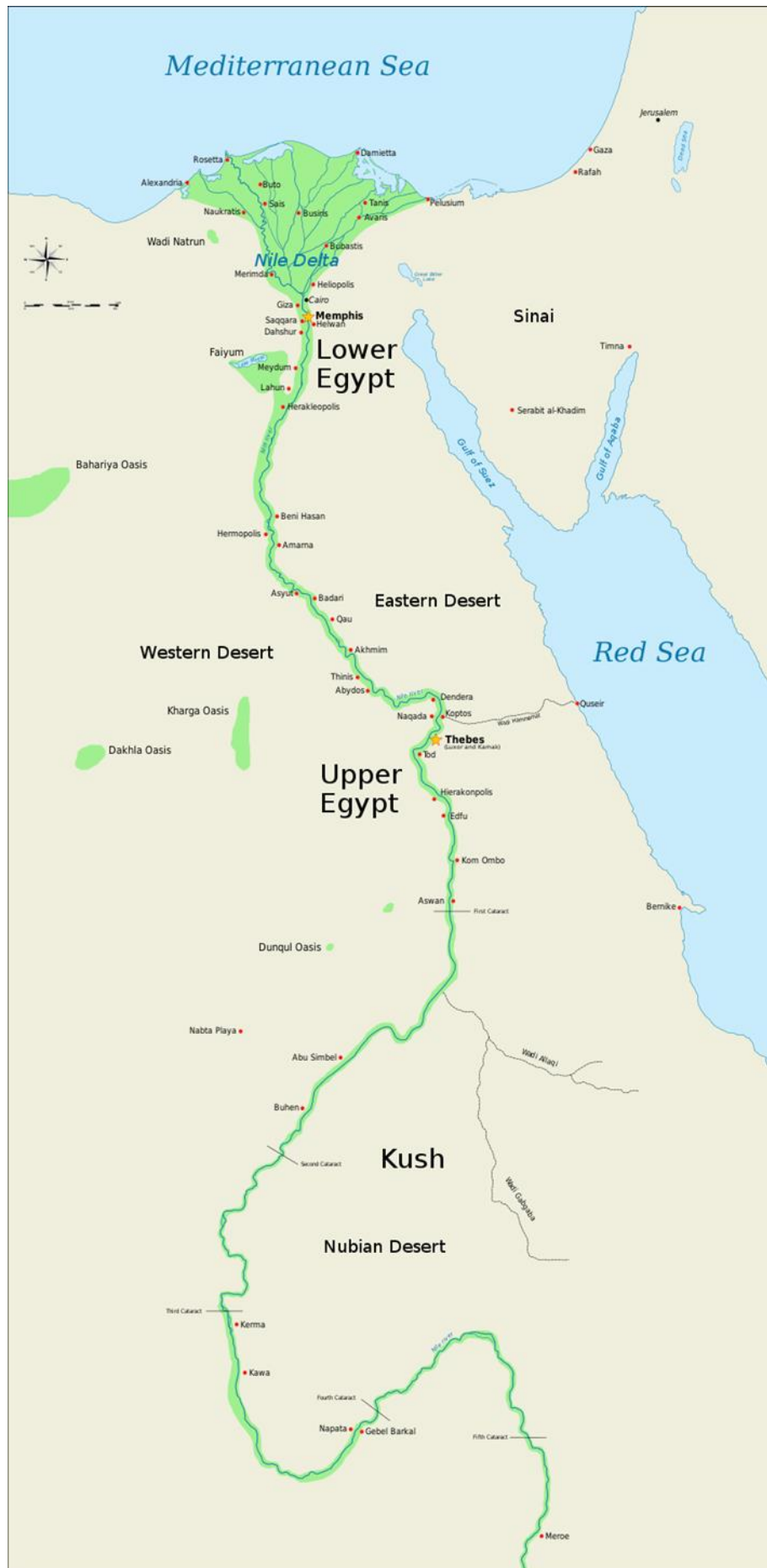
Notes: 1. Periods are approximate. 2. Some periods are co-terminus.

3. Information based on sources, some of which are contradictory.

## Important Egyptian Dynasties and Pharaohs

SN	Dynasty	Pharaoh	Period BC
1	First	Menes	3150
2	Third	Djoser	2650
3	Fourth	Khufu	2589-2566
4	Fourth	Khafre	2558-2532
5	Eighteenth	Tuthmosis I	1520-1492
6	Eighteenth	Tuthmosis II	1492-1479
7	Eighteenth	Hatshepsut	1479-1458
8	Eighteenth	Tuthmosis III	1458-1425
9	Eighteenth	Amenhotep IV	1352-1336
10	Eighteenth	Tutenkhamun	1332-1324
11	Nineteenth	Ramses II	1279-1213
12	Twenty-sixth	Ahmose II	570-526
13	Twenty-seventh	Darius I	522-486
14	Twenty-seventh	Xerxes I	486-465
15	Twenty-seventh	Darius II	423-404
16	Thirty-first	Darius III	336-332
17	Ptolemaic	Soter	305-282
18	Ptolemaic	Cleopatra VII	52-30
19	Ptolemaic	Ptolemy XV Caesar	44-30





In the three millennia span of Egypt history, the deeds of 32 dynasties and 359 pharaohs are recorded. About a dozen pharaohs have left indelible marks on the Egyptian civilization. Along with these outstanding pharaohs, one must acknowledge the contribution of the great historians who, through their writings, have facilitated our understanding of the human civilization and culture.

The unified kingdom of the Egyptian territory was founded c. 3150 BCE by King Menes, leading to the dynasties that ruled Egypt for three millennia. The first two dynasties of the unified Egypt set the stage for the Old Kingdom (c. 2700–2200 BC), which built many pyramids.

The shape of the Egyptian pyramids is thought to represent the primordial mound from which, they believed, the earth was created. The shape of a pyramid is also believed to represent the descending rays of the sun and therefore, most pyramids were given a surface of polished, reflective white limestone, to give them a shiny appearance. Pyramids were generally named in ways that referred to the solar luminescence.

While it is generally agreed that pyramids were burial monuments, there is some disagreement on the particular theological principles that might have given birth to them. One suggestion is that they were designed as a ‘resurrection machine.’

The Egyptians believed the dark area of the night sky around which the stars appear to revolve, was the physical gateway to the heavens. One of the narrow shafts that extend from the main burial chamber through the entire body of the Great Pyramid points directly towards the centre of the sky. This suggests the pyramid may have been designed to serve as a means to magically launch the deceased pharaoh's soul into the abode of the gods.

All Egyptian pyramids were built on the west bank of the Nile, which, as the site of the setting sun, was associated with the realm of the dead in Egyptian mythology.

The question that has baffled many archaeologists is: how the blocks were moved up the superstructure. The first historical account of the construction of pyramids comes from Herodotus in the 5th century BC:

*“This pyramid was made like the stairs, which some call steps and others, tiers. When this, its first form, was completed, the workmen used short wooden logs as levers to raise the rest of the stones; they heaved up the blocks from the ground onto the first tier of steps; when the stone had been raised, it was set on another lever that stood on the first tier, and the lever again used to lift it from this tier to the next. It may be that there was a new lever on each tier of steps, or perhaps there was only one lever, quite portable, which they carried up to each tier in turn.”*

Most Egyptologists acknowledge that ramps are the most credible of the methods to raise the blocks, yet they acknowledge that it is an incomplete method that must

be supplemented by another device. Archaeological evidence for the use of ramps has been found at the Great Pyramid of Giza and other pyramids. The method most accepted for assisting ramps is levering.



Credit: ancient-origins.net



Credit: historymuseum.ca



Mathematician Kurt Mendelssohn calculated that the workforce may have been 50,000 men at most, while Ludwig Borchardt and Louis Croon placed the number at 36,000. According to Miroslav Verner, a workforce of no more than 30,000 was needed in the Great Pyramid's construction. There is some evidence to suggest that around 5,000 were permanent workers on salaries with the balance working three- or four-month shifts in lieu of payment of taxes. The vast majority of the workforce provided support services such as scribes, toolmakers and other backup services.

The logistics of construction at Giza were staggering: the Egyptians had no pulleys, no wheels, and no iron tools. Yet, the dimensions of the pyramid are extremely accurate and the site was levelled within a fraction of an inch over the entire 13-acre base! Average core blocks of the Great Pyramid weighed about 1.5 tons each, and the granite blocks used to roof the burial chambers are estimated to weigh up to 80 tons each.



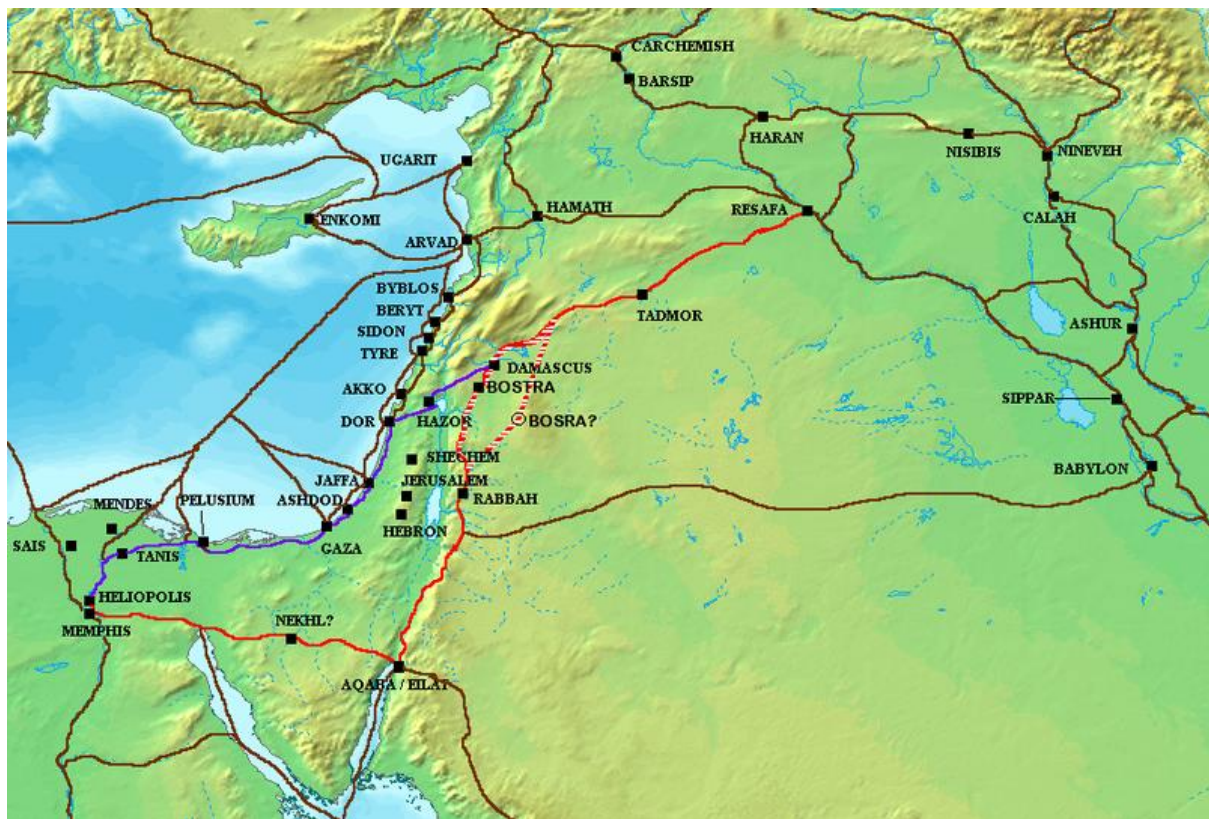
Credit: historymuseum.ca

The entire Giza Plateau is believed to have been constructed over the reign of five pharaohs lasting a hundred years.

In the Early Dynastic Period, which began around 3150 BC, the kings consolidated control over lower Egypt by establishing capital at Memphis, from where they could control agriculture of the fertile delta region, as well as the trade routes to the Levant (a historical geographical term referring to the Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia; in its narrowest sense, it included present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine and most of Turkey. In its broadest historical

sense, the Levant included all of the countries along the Eastern Mediterranean shores, extending from Greece to Cyrenaica in eastern Libya). The increasing power and wealth of the kings during the early dynastic period was reflected in their elaborate *mastaba* (eternal) tombs and mortuary cult structures at Abydos, which were used to celebrate the deified king after his death.

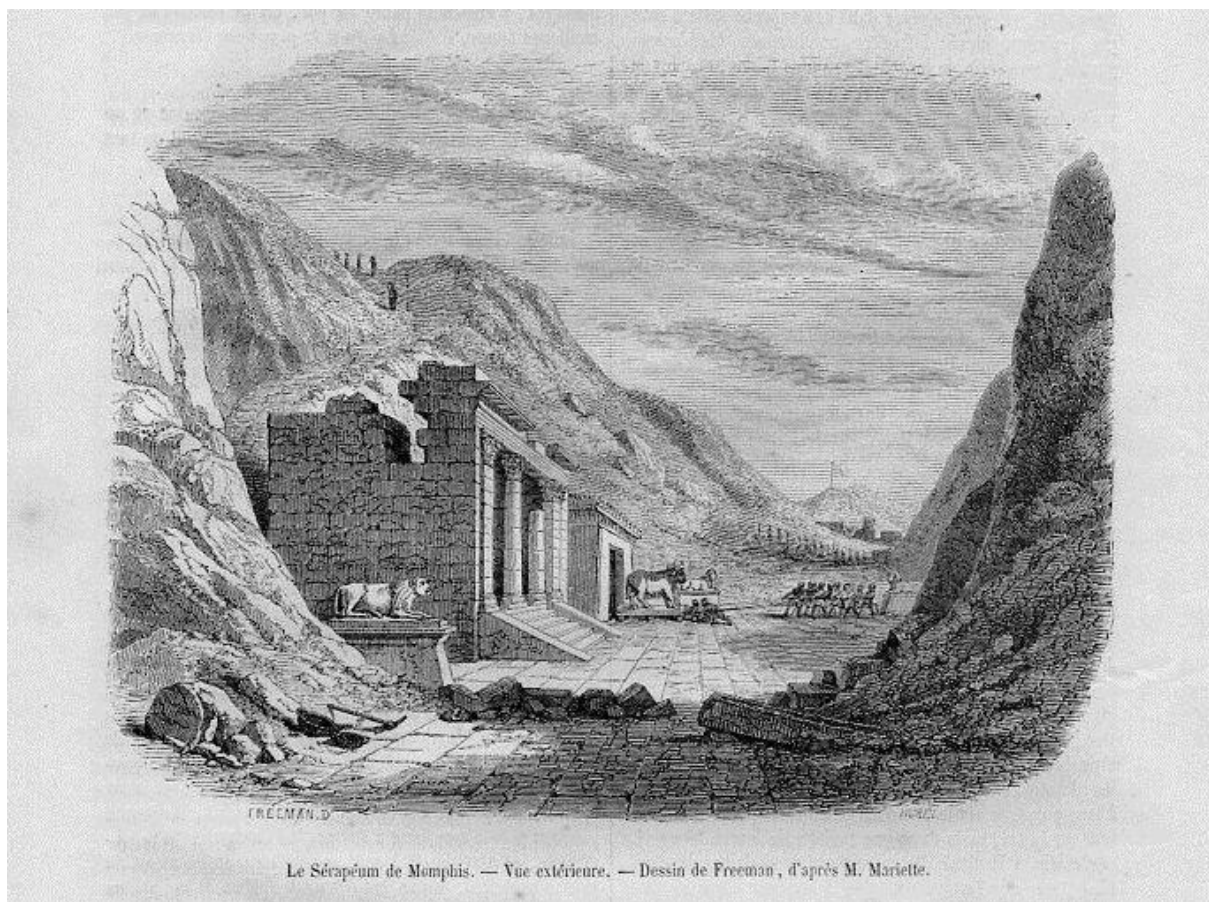
The ruins of Memphis have been located near the town of Mit Rahina, south of Giza in Greater Cairo. Abydos was an important city considered sacred, as it was the site of many temples including the royal necropolis where early pharaohs were entombed. These tombs began to be seen as significant burials and in later times it became a matter of prestige to be buried in the area, which led to the growth of the town's importance as a cult site.



Credit: Wikipedia.org

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Credit: ebay.it.itm

### Old Kingdom (2686–2181 BC)

Major advances in art, architecture and technology were made during the Old Kingdom, financed by wealth generated by increased agricultural production and efficient tax administration. The Giza pyramids and Great Sphinx, were all constructed during the Old Kingdom.





Khufu, Credit: [historicaleve.com](http://historicaleve.com)

Khufu, known to the Greeks as (Khéops) and to the Romans as Cheops; was the second pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty. He commissioned the Great Pyramid of Giza, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Khufu was the first pharaoh to build a pyramid at Giza. The sheer scale of this monument stands as a testament to his skills in commanding and managing the material and human resources of his country. The Greek historian Herodotus propagated the notion that Khufu used slaves to build the pyramid, although now, it is generally accepted that perhaps conscripts were used. Herodotus also vilified Khufu as a cruel and wicked leader who prostituted his daughter when he ran out of funds. However, the Westcar Papyrus (an ancient Egyptian text containing five stories about miracles performed by priests and magicians) describes Khufu as a good-natured king who was interested in the welfare of his people.

Khafre (or Khafra) was the son of Khufu. Herodotus called him a cruel king, like his father, (without giving details about his cruel deeds). Cruel or kind, Egypt prospered under his rule, like never before.



Khafra, Credit: [cleopatraegyptours.com](http://cleopatraegyptours.com)



Sphinx and the Great Pyramid of Khufu, Credit: [Britannica.com](http://Britannica.com)



Khafra, was named after Ra or Re (hence, Khafra or Khafre) the Sun God, one of the most important gods for the Egyptians. The Creator of the universe, the Giver of life, the sun or Ra represented life, warmth and growth. He was most worshiped of all the Egyptian Gods and was considered their King.



Credit: ancientpages.com



Credit: swanbazaar.com

With the growing importance of a central administration, a new class of educated scribes and officials emerged who were granted lands by the pharaoh for their writing and numerical skills, which were in great demand and short supply.





Credit: shutterstock.com



Credit: thoughtco.com

## Middle Kingdom (2134–1690 BC)

The pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom continued patronage of art, literature, and monumental building projects. Pharaoh Amenemhat III, allowed migration of people from the Near East to provide the large labour force needed for the mining and construction projects. These expensive activities combined with severe Nile floods later in his reign, strained the economy causing its decline which continued into the later Thirteenth and Fourteenth dynasties.



Amenemhat III, Credit: [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amenemhat_III.jpg)

## New Kingdom (1549–1069 BC)

The New Kingdom pharaohs ushered in a period of unprecedented prosperity by securing their borders while improving relations with neighbours. The successful military campaigns waged by Tuthmosis I and later by his grandson Tuthmosis III made their empire largest in Egyptian history.





Credit: Wikipedia.org

Tuthmosis I was the son of a non-royal mother, but since Amenhotep I did not have an heir, his general Tuthmosis I succeeded him and ruled from 1493 BC to 1482 BC. Tuthmosis II was the son of Tuthmosis I and his minor (status-wise)



wife, Mutnofret. Being a lesser son of Thutmose I he chose to marry his fully royal half-sister, Hatshepsut. His 'lesser' wife, Iset though, gave him a son, just before his death, who went on to become Tuthmosis III.



Hatshepsut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Some Egyptologists believe that Hatshepsut was the real power behind the throne during Tuthmosis II's rule. She is depicted in several raised relief scenes from a Karnak gateway dated to Tuthmosis II's reign both with him and by herself. She later had herself crowned as Pharaoh and ruled for several years before the ascension of Tuthmosis III.

Hatshepsut, 'Foremost of the Noble Ladies' (1507–1458 BC) was the fifth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt. She was the second historically confirmed female pharaoh, the first being Sobekneferu (1806-1802 BC). Sobekneferu was one of the few women to rule Egypt and the first to adopt the full royal title, distinguishing herself from any prior female rulers.

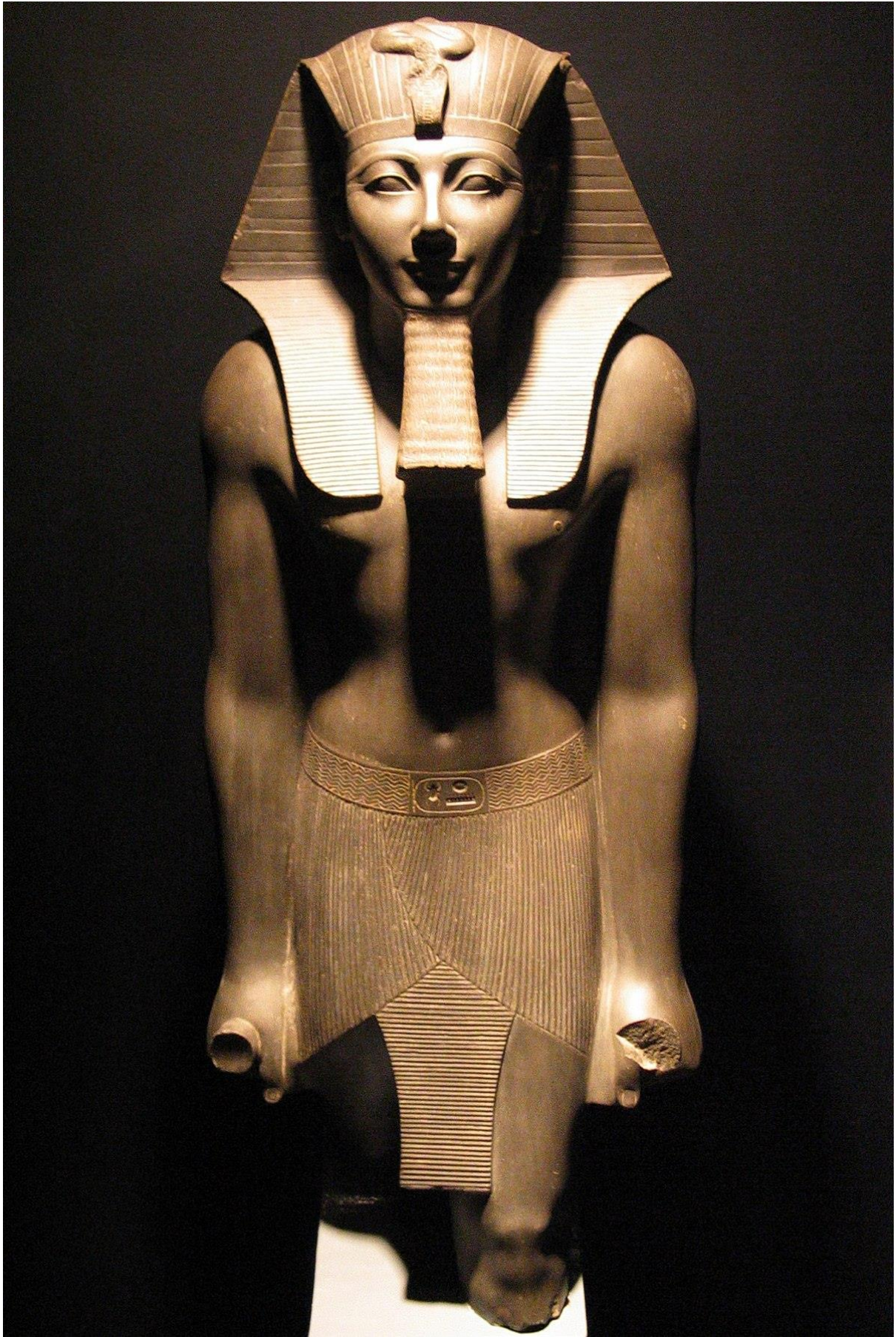
Hatshepsut ascended the throne of Egypt in 1478 BC. Her bloodline was absolutely impeccable as she was the daughter, sister, and wife of a king.



Sobekneferu or Neferusobek, Credit: baslibrary.com

When Tuthmosis III came of age, Hatshepsut gave him command of the armed forces and he proved himself an exceptional military strategist and a charismatic leader. Tuthmosis III was the sixth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty. Officially, he ruled Egypt for about 54 years and his reign covers the period from 1479 BC to 1425 BC, his solo reign lasted 32 years, during which he led 17 successful military campaigns. His military scribe, General Tjaneni accompanied him on these campaigns and kept a journal on a leather scroll which Tuthmosis III admired so much that he ordered the narrative to be inscribed on the walls of the temple of Amun at Karnak. They are considered the most extensive and authentic records of ancient Egyptian military campaigns. He has been compared with Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon, they say, he did not lose a single battle!









Thutmose III in The Battle of Megiddo, Credit: warhistoryonline.com



Karnak Temple, The Pylon of Thutmose III, Credit: discoveringegypt.com

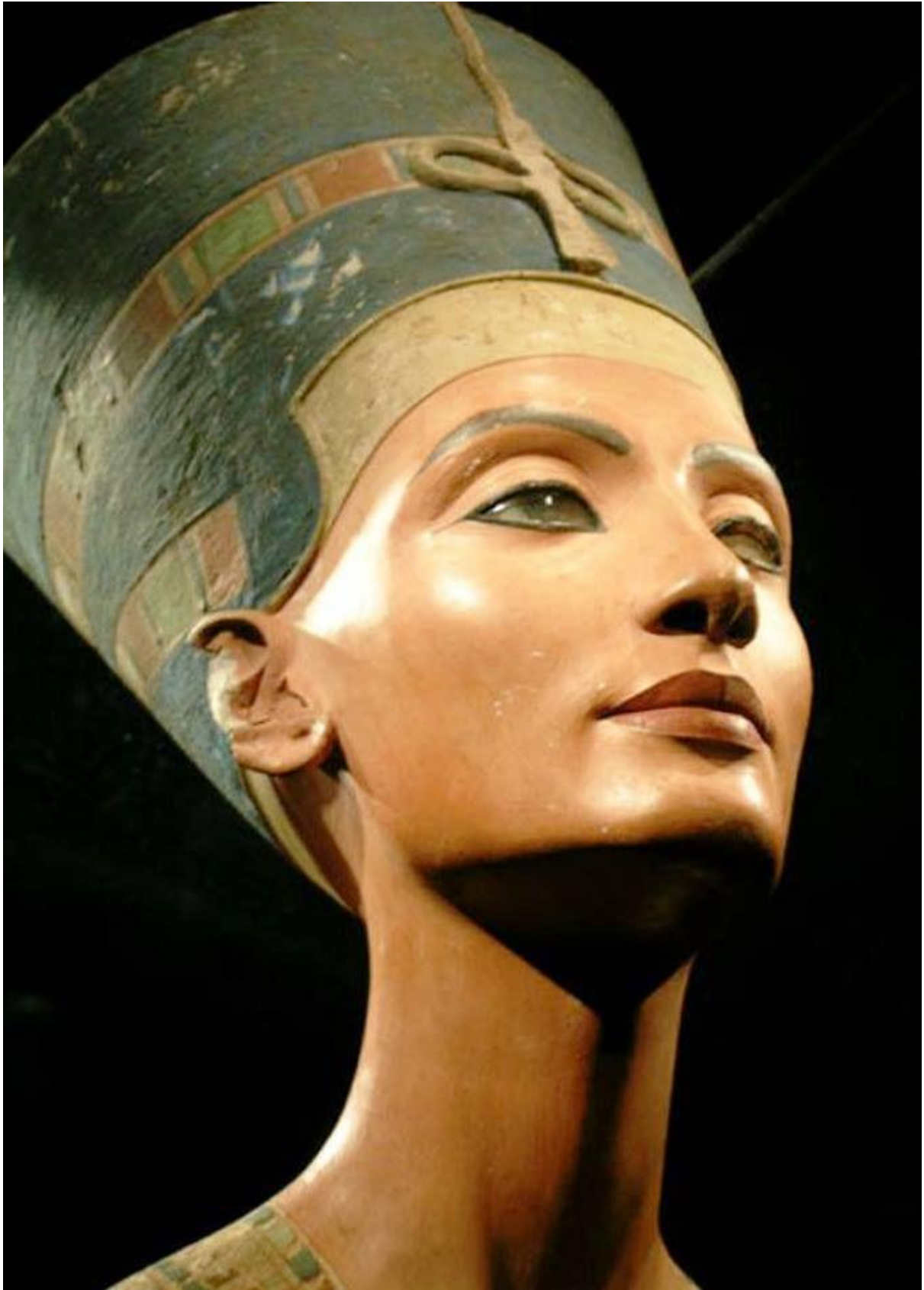
Tuthmosis III was not only a great warrior, but was also a great patron of arts and culture. He ordered construction of many temples, monuments and renovated the Karnak temple.

Akhenaten also known as Amenhotep (1353–1336) is known for abandoning Egypt's traditional polytheism and introducing Atenism, or worship centred around God Aten. This heretical shift was extremely unpopular. After his death, his monuments were dismantled, his statues were destroyed, and his name was excluded from the lists of rulers compiled by later pharaohs. Traditional religious practice was gradually restored, notably under his close successor Tutankhamun, who changed his name from Tutankhaten early in his reign.









Page 98 Top: Pharaoh Akhenaten touched by the rays of the god Aten, Credit: Wikimedia Commons; Page 98 Below: Akhenaton with Nefertiti and their daughters, Credit: Britannica.com





Tutankhamun Credit: egypttoday.com



Credit: pinterest.com

Tutankhamun, popularly known as King Tut, was the last of the royal family of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1332 – 1324 BC). He ascended the throne at the age of eight or nine. He restored the traditional polytheism reversing his father's policy and restored damaged monuments.







Ramesses II, commonly referred to as Ramesses the Great ('Born of Ra' just like Khafra, the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty pharaoh) is the most celebrated pharaoh of all.

Ra, the ancient Egyptian deity of the Sun had the most important god by the Fifth Dynasty (25<sup>th</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) identified with the noon-day Sun.

Ramesses II led several military expeditions into the Levant, reasserting Egyptian control over Canaan and Nubia. The early part of his reign was focused on building cities, temples, and monuments. He established the city of Pi-Ramesses in the Nile Delta as his new capital and used it as the main base for his campaigns in Syria.



Pi-Ramesses, Credit: patheos.com

The death of Ramesses II in 1213 BC threw Egypt into a precipitous decline for seven centuries.



In 525 BC, the Persians, led by Cambyses II captured the pharaoh Psamtik III at the Battle of Pelusium.

Polyaenus, a retired Macedonian general claimed that Cambyses II captured Pelusium by using cats, regarded sacred by the Egyptians, (they worshipped cat goddess named Bastet) and therefore, would not hurt them at any cost. Cambyses had his men throw cats at the Egyptians soldiers who dared not shoot arrows for fear of wounding them, thus facilitating Pelusium victory.



Battle of Pelusium, Credit: [egypttourportal.com](http://egypttourportal.com)



Cambyses II, after winning the battle of Pelusium, (in which about fifty thousand Egyptian soldiers were said to have lost their lives), assumed the title of Pharaoh, but ruled Egypt from Susa in Persia, leaving Egypt under Pherendares, who he appointed as his satrap. Persia gained a great amount of wealth from looting and imposition of taxes which weakened Egypt's capacity to revolt against Persia. Because they had defeated the pharaohs of the twenty-sixth dynasty, Persian kings were accepted as pharaohs and came to be known as Egypt's Twenty-seventh Dynasty.

The Persian rule over Egypt, ended in 402 BC, when some minor dynasties fought and claimed independence. In 332 BC, the Persian ruler Mazaces handed over Egypt to Alexander the Great without a fight.



Roman mosaic of Alexander riding Bucephalus, his celebrated horse.

Bucephalus' breed was that of the best Thessalian strain; he died in Punjab in 326 BC.

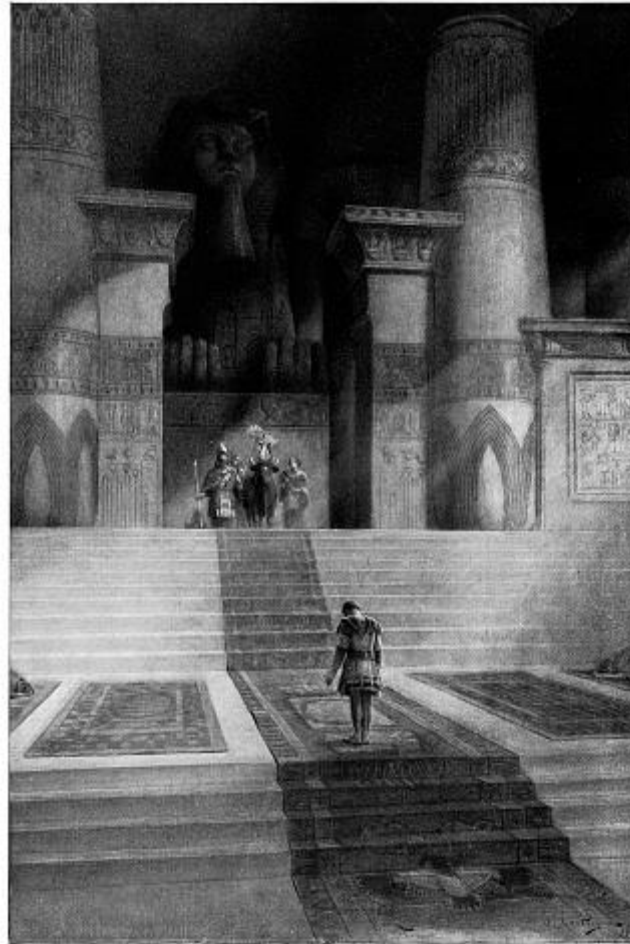
He was buried at Jalalpur Sharif, Credit: Wikipedia.org

Next page, Alexander cutting the Gordian Knot, Credit: nationalgeographic.com









ALEXANDER AT THE TEMPLE OF APIS IN MEMPHIS.

Credit: Wikipedia.org

In ancient Egyptian religion, Apis or Hapis, was a sacred bull worshiped in the Memphis region. The Apis bull was a sacred animal to the ancient Egyptians. Apis was seen as a symbol of courageous heart, great strength, and fighting spirit, in fact, a manifestation of the king.

The Apis bull lived in the Apieion region of Memphis. Only one Apis bull at a time was worshipped in Egypt. After the bull died, it was mummified and buried in the Serapeum in Saqqara (which was the designated burial place for sacred bulls). The new Apis bull was selected based on certain physical characteristics, the most important of which was a white triangle on the forehead.

Jean Alexandre Michel André Castaigne was a French artist and engraver who created more than 36 art pieces about Alexander the Great and the one showing Alexander bowing before the Apis in its Memphis temple shows him paying diplomatic obeisance.

Alexander the Great was welcomed by the Egyptians as a liberator. Anointed as pharaoh in Memphis on 14 November 332 B. C. the culmination of his coronation was the climactic moment when the Oracle of Siwa named him 'Son of the Gods' following traditions going back 3,000 years. This title deeply affected him. In a world where the gods were perceived as living entities and were considered a part of everyday life, Alexander must have started to believe in his divinity as a matter of fact rather than as an exercise in flattery.

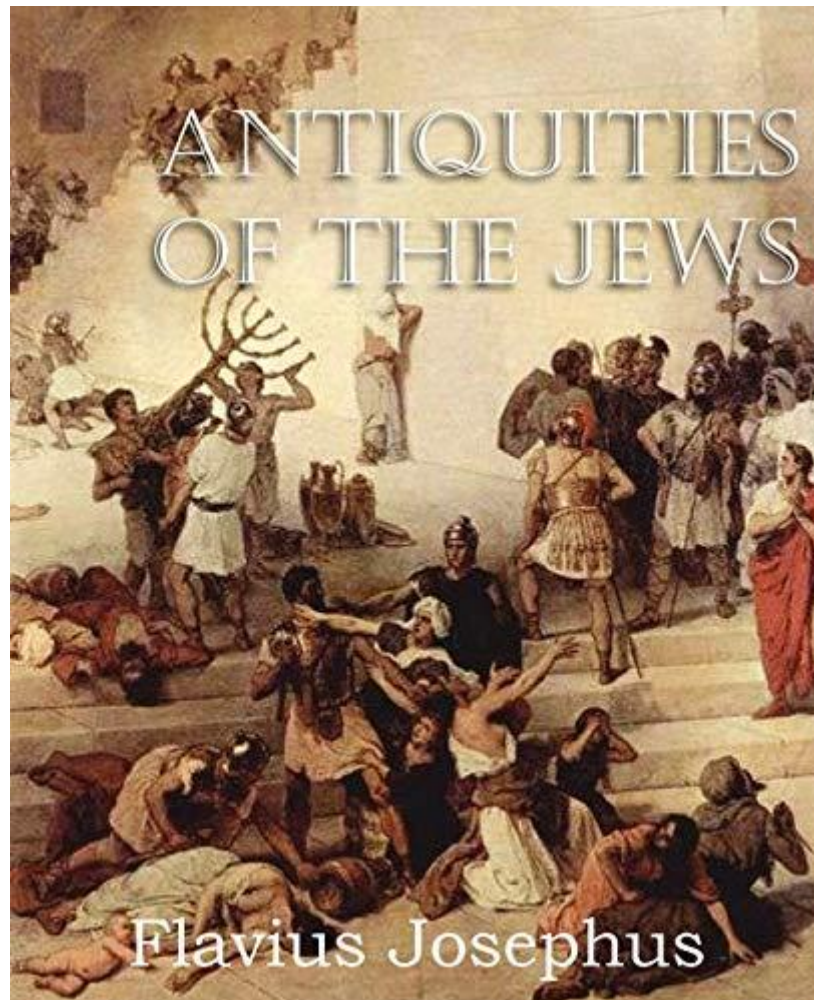


Alexander the Great kneeling before the High priest of Ammon in Siwa, Egypt

Credit: factsanddetails.com

There are many legends surrounding the life of Alexander, probably encouraged by his courtiers and himself. In one, Josephus in his celebrated 'Antiquities of the Jews', mentions that Alexander visited Jerusalem and saluted the high priest, saying that he had seen him in his dreams back in Macedonia. The Talmud mentions that the Samaritans conspired to destroy the temple, but Alexander prostrated himself at the feet of the high priest Simon the Just. It also mentions other legends such as Alexander at the Gate of Paradise, his ascent into the air, and Descent into the Sea.

A few centuries after Alexander's death, probably in Alexandria, legends coalesced into 'the Alexander Romance', ascribed to the historian Callisthenes. Latin and Syriac versions were imaginatively translated into Armenian, Georgian, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, German, English, Italian, French and other languages.



Credit: amazon.in

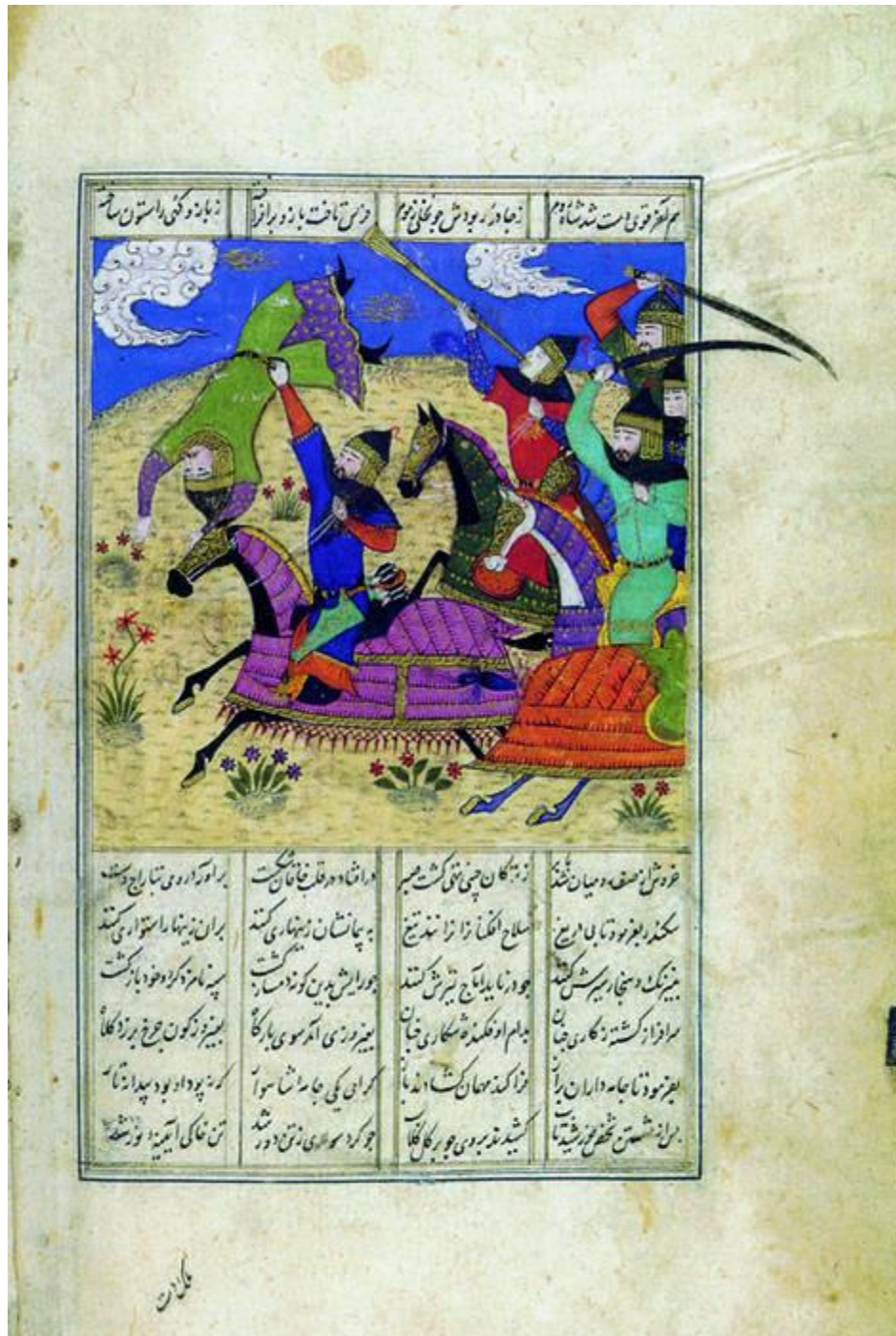
The Gates of Alexander (Caspian Gates) were a legendary barrier built in the Caucasus to keep the uncivilized barbarians of the north from invading the land to the south.

Alexander has also been identified with *Dhul-Qarnayn*, (The Two-Horned One), mentioned in the Quran.

Persian accounts of the Alexander legend, known as the *Iskandarnamah*, combined the Callisthenes and Syriac material, some of which is found in the Qur'an, with Sasanian Persian ideas. He is sometimes depicted not as a conqueror, but as a seeker of truth who eventually finds the *Ab-i Hayat* (Water of Life). The Romance



and the Syriac Legend are also the sources of incidents in Ferdowsi's Shahnama. There is a Mongolian version as well.



Alexander fighting the enemy, 15th century Persian miniature, Czartoryski Museum, Krakow

According to the Greek Alexander Romance, Queen Thalestris of the Amazons brought 300 women to Alexander the Great, hoping to breed a race of children as strong and intelligent as he.





18th-century painting of Amazon Queen Thalestris in the Camp of Alexander,  
by Johann Georg Platzer, Credit: Wikipedia.org





Previous page: The Great Library of Alexandria, Credit: facebook.com

The Macedonian Ptolemaic Kingdom with capital at Alexandria became symbol of the power and prestige of the Hellenistic rule. The Library of Alexandria acquired status as a great seat of learning and the Lighthouse of Alexandria started guiding ships to keep the trade flowing.



The Lighthouse of Alexandria, Credit: 1001inventions.com

Ptolemy, a general and possible half-brother of Alexander the Great was appointed Satrap of Egypt after Alexander's death in 323 BC. In 305 BC, he declared himself Pharaoh Ptolemy I, later known as Sōter (the 'Saviour').





Previous page, Ptolemy I, Credit: Wikipedia.org

The Egyptians soon accepted the Ptolemies as the successors to the pharaohs of independent Egypt. The Ptolemy dynasty ruled Egypt until the Roman conquest of 30 BC.



Previous page: Cleopatra by Bartolomeo Neroni, Credit: philamuseum.org

Cleopatra VII (69 BC-30 BC) was the last ruler of the Ptolemaic dynasty. She was the only Ptolemaic ruler to learn the Egyptian language. After her death, Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire, marking the beginning of the end of the Hellenistic state.

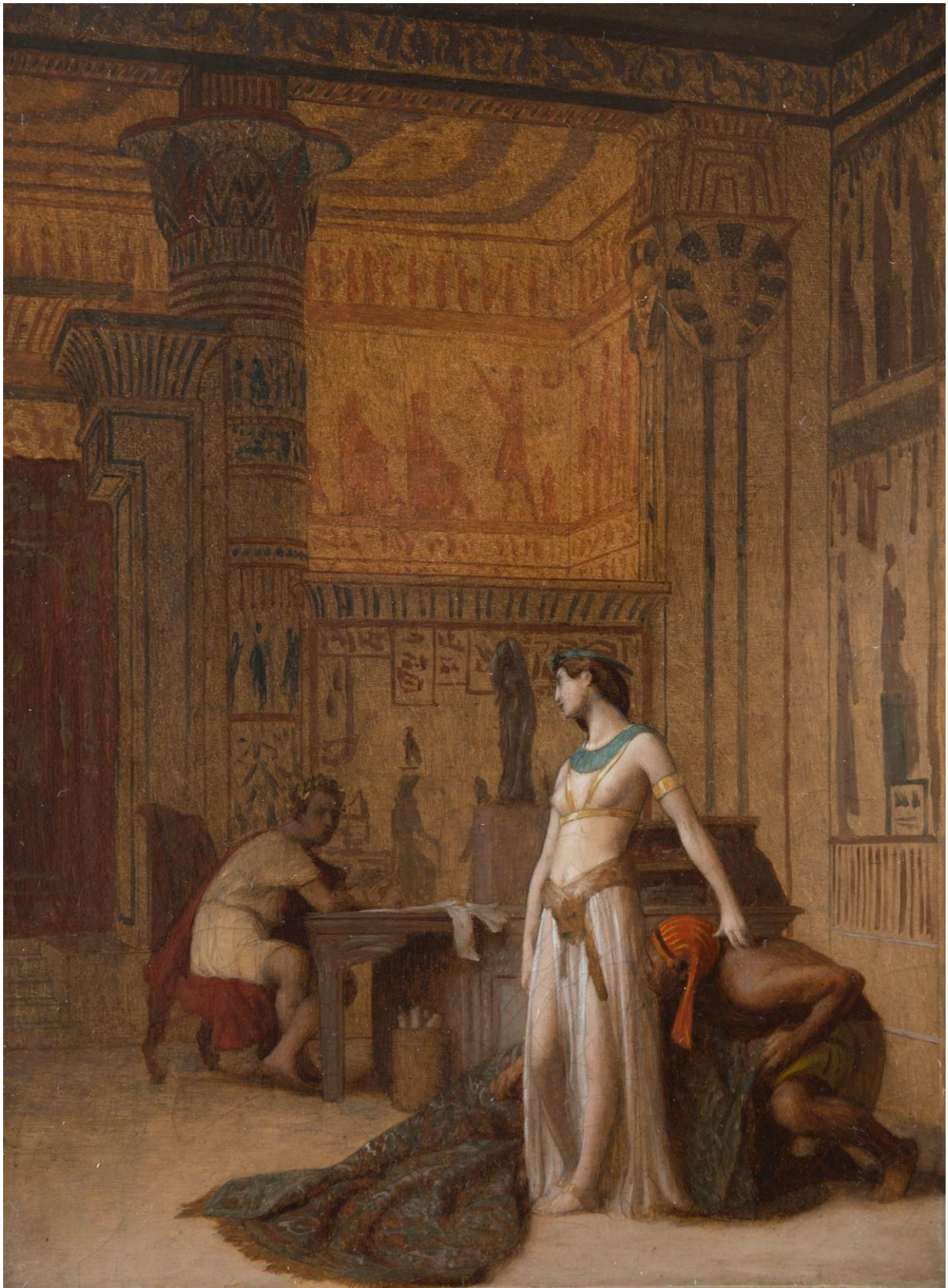


Credit: artsandculture.google.com



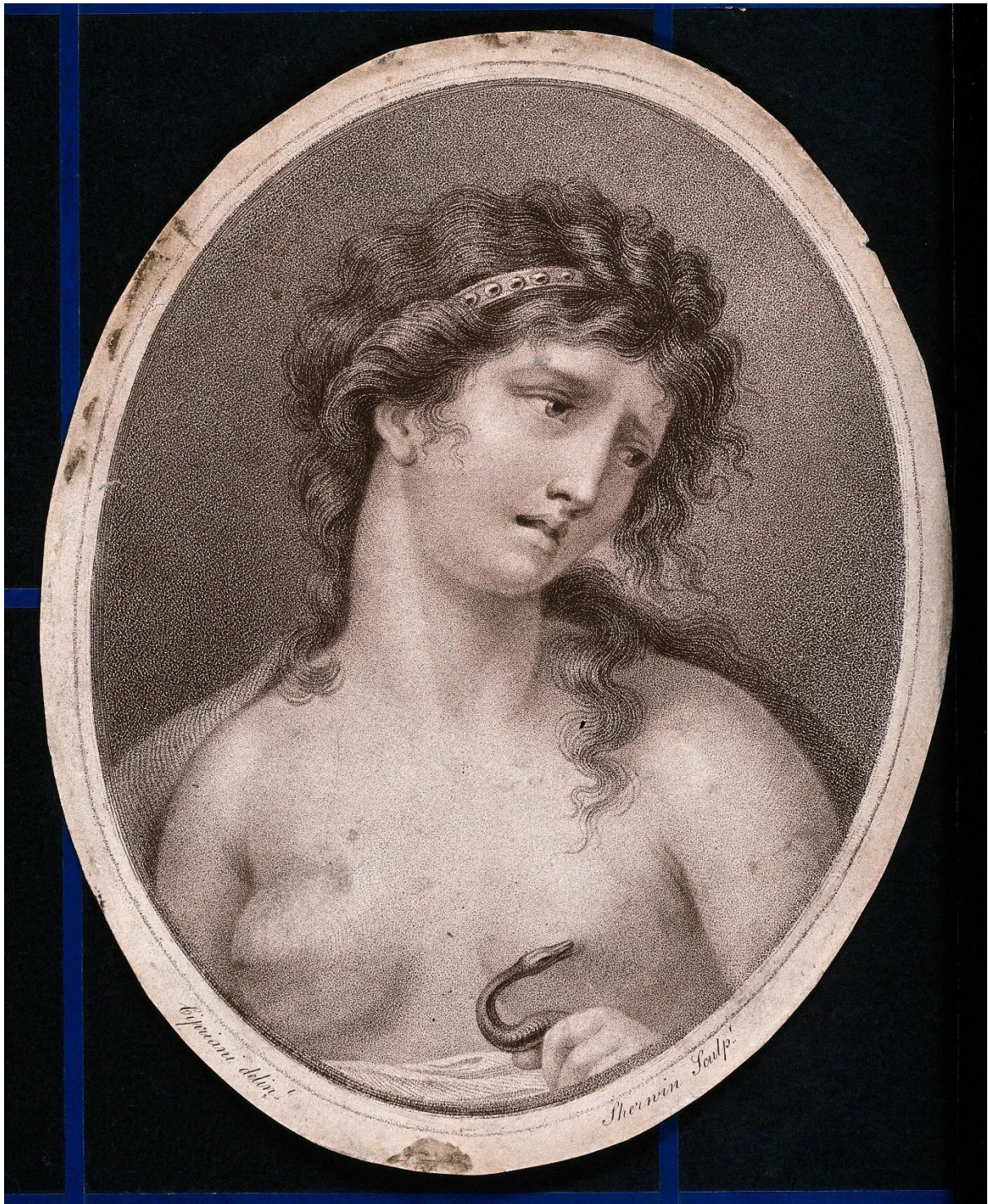
Antony and Cleopatra, Credit: nationalgeographic.com





Cleopatra and Caesar by Jean-Francois Heim, Credit: [galerieheim.com](http://galerieheim.com)



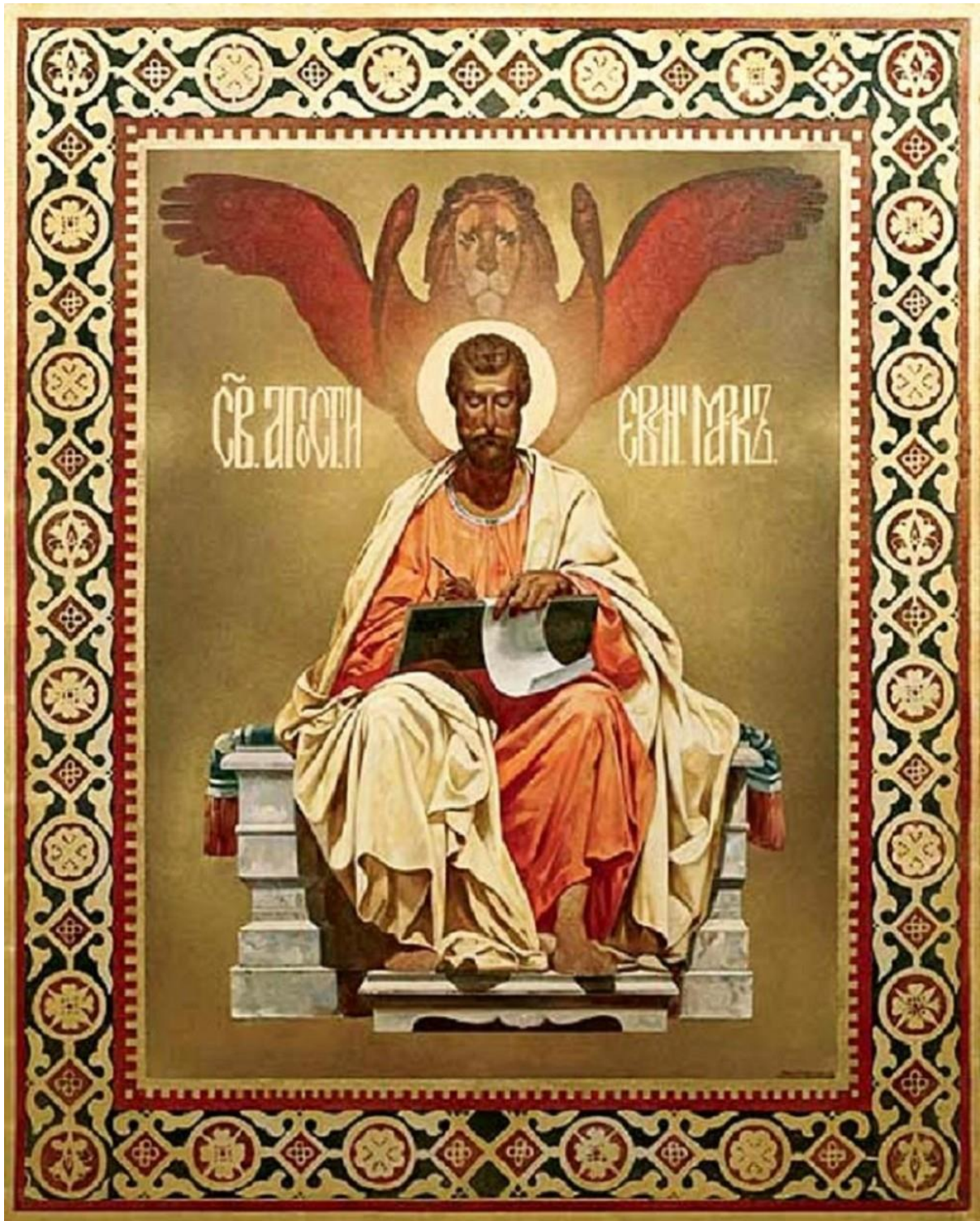


Cleopatra holding the asp, Stipple engraving by Sherwin after G.B. Cipriani

Credit: wellcomecollection.org

Christianity was brought to Egypt by Saint Mark the Evangelist (05-68 AD) in the 1st century. Mark is said to have founded the Church of Alexandria, one of the most important episcopal sees of Christianity.





St Mark, Credit: brightonoratory.org

The persecution launched by Emperor Diocletian (284 – 305), failed to halt spread of Christianity; on the contrary, after 324, it became the Empire's preferred religion, leading to the establishment of the Egyptian Coptic Church in 451 AD.



St. Sebastian Confronts the Emperor Diocletian by Eric Armusik, Credit: useum.org

### Roman and Byzantine period (30 BC – AD 641)

The Romans were heavily reliant on grain from Egypt and the Roman army, under the control of a prefect appointed by the Emperor Augustus quelled rebellions, enforced collection of taxes and established order. Alexandria's importance as a trade route with the orient grew further.





Previous page: gold coin of Emperor Augustus, Credit: mintageworld.com

Although the Romans had a stricter attitude towards the Egyptians than the Greeks, they allowed some traditions such as mummification and worship of traditional gods to continue. Under their rule, administration became more Roman in character.

Around the mid-first century AD, Christianity struck roots. Originally, it was seen as an acceptable cult. However, as it sought to win converts from Egyptian and Greco-Roman religions by criticising the popular traditions, persecution of the Christian converts started. In 391, the Christian Emperor Theodosius banned pagan rites and closed pagan temples. Alexandria witnessed large anti-pagan riots in which public and private religious images were destroyed; resulting in decline of native religious culture. The Egyptian temples were abandoned and/or became churches.



Theodosius I Credit: Wikipedia.org



Credit: rome.mrdonn.org

In the fourth century, the Roman Empire was divided, Egypt became part of the Eastern Empire with capital at Constantinople. In the last phase of the Empire, Egypt fell first to the Persian army (618 -628), then to the Roman Emperor Heraclius (629–639) and was finally captured by the army of Rashidun Caliphate in 639–641.



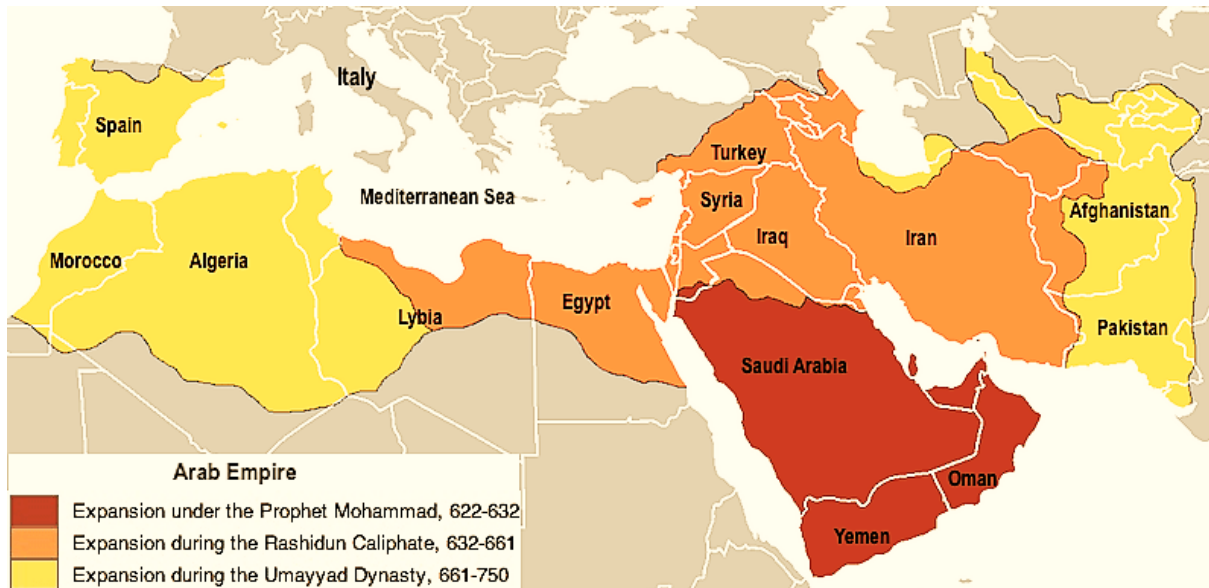
Byzantine Emperor Heraclius overcoming Persian King Khosrau II, c. 1160-1170 CE

Credit: [courses.lumenlearning.com](https://courses.lumenlearning.com)

The Rashidun Empire was the first of the four caliphates established after the death of prophet Muhammad in June 632. These four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali) are collectively known as the Rashidun, or 'Rightly Guided' caliphs. The Rashidun Caliphate witnessed a twenty-five-year period of rapid military expansion followed by a five-year period of internal strife. At its peak, the Rashidun Army had more than 100,000 men in arms. By 650, in addition to the



Arabian Peninsula, the caliphate had subjugated the Levant, Egypt, Tunisia, Iran and parts of Central and South Asia.



Credit: thinkafrica.net

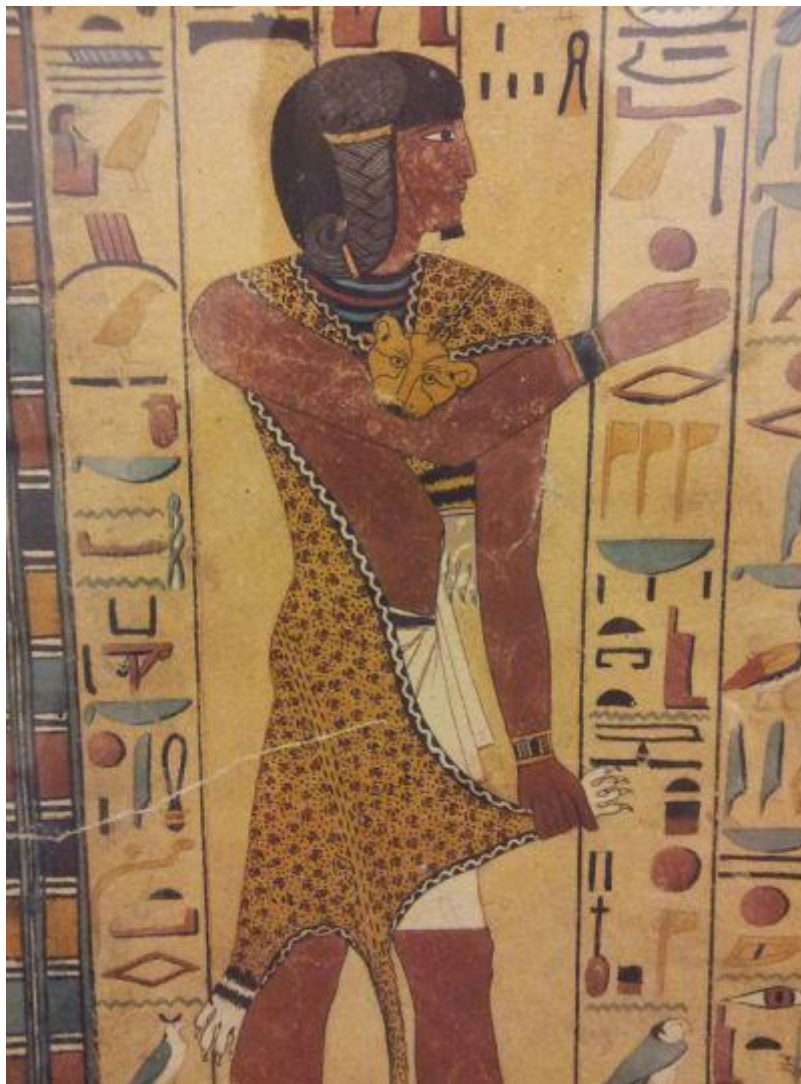


The Four Caliphs, Credit: rayyaninstitute.com

Middle Ages (7<sup>th</sup> century AD – 1250 AD)

The Byzantines were able to regain control of the country after Persian invasion early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century amidst the Byzantine–Persian War of 602–628 during which they established a new province for ten years known as Persian Egypt.

During 639–42, Egypt was invaded and conquered by the Muslim Arabs. When they defeated the Byzantine armies in Egypt, the Arabs brought Sunni Islam to the country. Early in this period, Egyptians began to blend their new faith with indigenous beliefs and practices, leading to various Sufi orders that exist to this day.

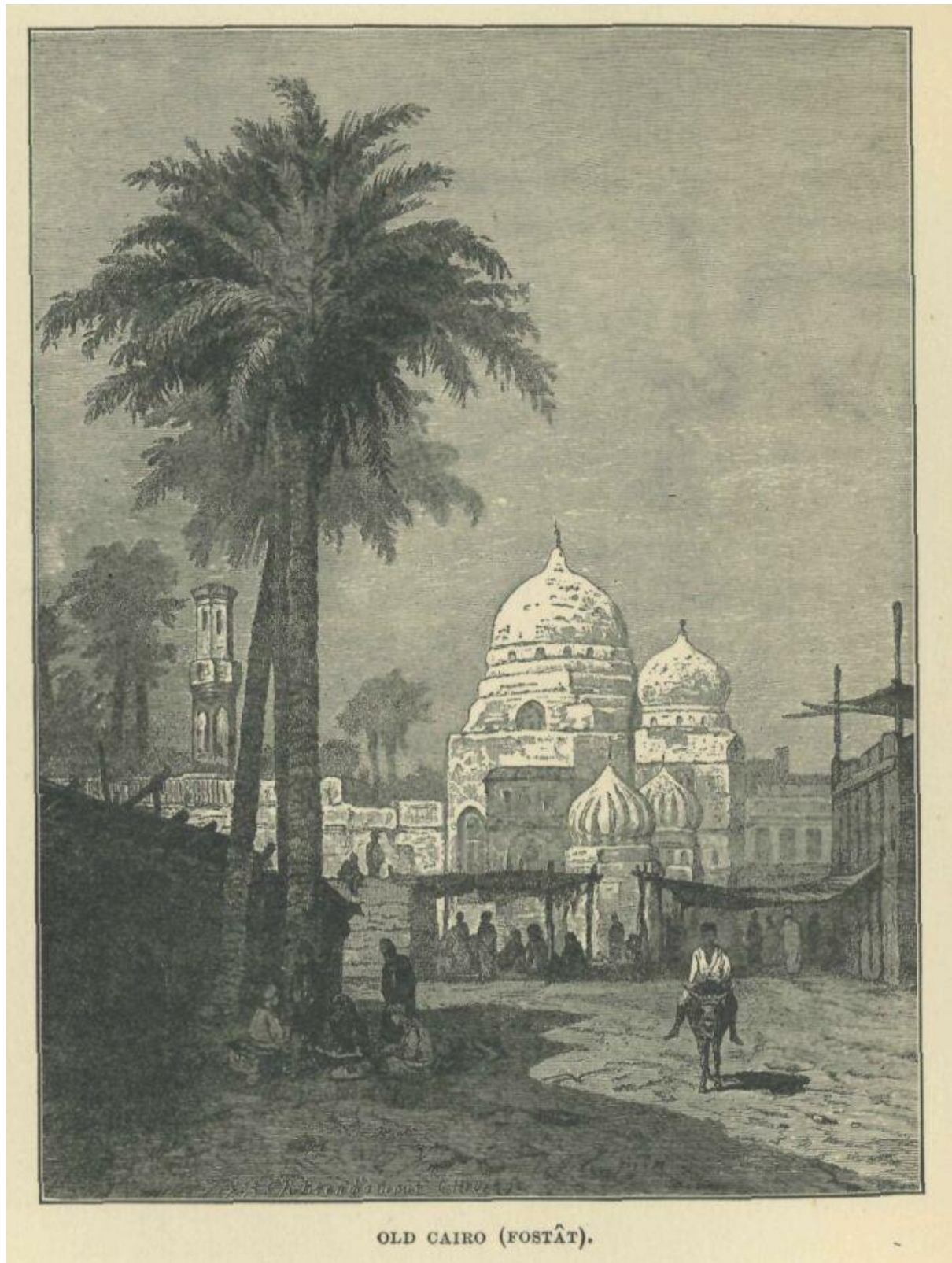


The Egyptian Sufi Dhu'l Nun al-Misri, Credit: independentphilosophy.net

The Arabs founded the first capital of Egypt called Fustat/Fostat, near present day Cairo. It was built by General Amr ibn al-As in 641 AD with the Mosque of Amr,



the first mosque built in Egypt. Five centuries later, in 1168, it was ordered to be burnt by the vizier Shawar, to deny its huge wealth to the invading Crusaders.



OLD CAIRO (FOSTÂT).

Credit: Wikipedia.org

### Abbasid period (566–653 CE)

The Abbasid Caliphate was the third caliphate to succeed prophet Muhammad. It was founded by descendants of Muhammad's uncle, Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib (566–653 CE), after whom the dynasty takes its name. They ruled as caliphs from Baghdad. The dynasty relied on Persian bureaucrats for governing the territories. This dependence proved costly and they were forced to cede Andalus (Spain and Portugal) to the Umayyads in 756, Morocco to the Idrisids in 788, Ifriqiya (Algeria) and Southern Italy to the Aghlabids in 800, Khorasan and Transoxiana (Central Asia) to the Samanids, Persia to the Saffarids in the 870s, and Egypt to the Isma'ili-Shia Caliphate of the Fatimids in 969.

The political power of the caliphs was reduced with the rise of the Persians and the Seljuq Turks, who captured Baghdad in 945 and 1055, respectively. Although Abbasid leadership was reduced to ceremonial functions, they retained control of their Mesopotamian domain. Their reign, however, came to end in 1258 with the sack of Baghdad by Mongols under Hulagu Khan. They retreated to the Mamluk capital of Cairo in 1261 and claimed religious authority over people.



Hulagu Khan, Credit: forums.taleworlds.com





Sack of Abbasid Baghdad, Credit: hizb-australia.org





### Ottoman Egypt (1517–1867)

Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1517, after which it became a province of the Ottoman Empire. Egypt was a difficult province for the Ottoman Sultans to control, because of the influence of the Mamluks, the military caste who had ruled the country for centuries. Egypt remained semi-autonomous under the Mamluks until it was invaded by the French forces of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon defeated the Mamluk troops in the Battle of the Pyramids, 21 July 1798. Although Napoleon gained victory on land, he was defeated by Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson in the Battle of the Nile (1-3 August 1798).



Battle of the Pyramids, Credit: historyonthisday.com

Bonaparte was determined to invade Egypt as the first step in his campaign against British India and the naval defeat did not disconcert him; he said *"We no longer have a navy. Well! We'll have to stay here just as the ancient great men did, or leave"*.





Battle of the Nile, Credit: wikipedia.org

### Muhammad Ali dynasty (1805-1953)

After the French were expelled, power was seized in 1805 by Muhammad Ali Pasha, an Albanian military commander of the Ottoman army in Egypt. He carried the title of the Viceroy of Egypt, but his loyalty to the Ottoman Empire was nominal. Muhammad Ali massacred the Mamluks and established a dynasty that was to rule Egypt until the Revolution of 1952.

Muhammad Ali annexed Northern Sudan (1820–1824), Syria (1833), and parts of Arabia and Anatolia; but in 1841, the European powers fearful, lest he topple the Ottoman Empire itself, forced him to return most of his conquests to the Ottomans. Undeterred, he proceeded to modernise the country: he built industries, a system of canals for irrigation and transport and reformed the civil service. He also revolutionized the military by introducing conscription and by imparting fighting skills. Education and training of the new soldiers became rigorous, the troops were strictly confined to the barracks to avoid distraction and were indoctrinated with the ideology of fierce nationalism.





Credit: wikipedia.org

Muhammad Ali was succeeded briefly by his son Ibrahim in September 1848, then by grandson Abbas I, in November 1848, then by Said in 1854, and Isma'il in 1863, who encouraged science and agriculture and banned slavery.





Ismail Pasha, Credit: napoleon.org



Muhammad Ali dynasty, Credit: Wikipedia.org



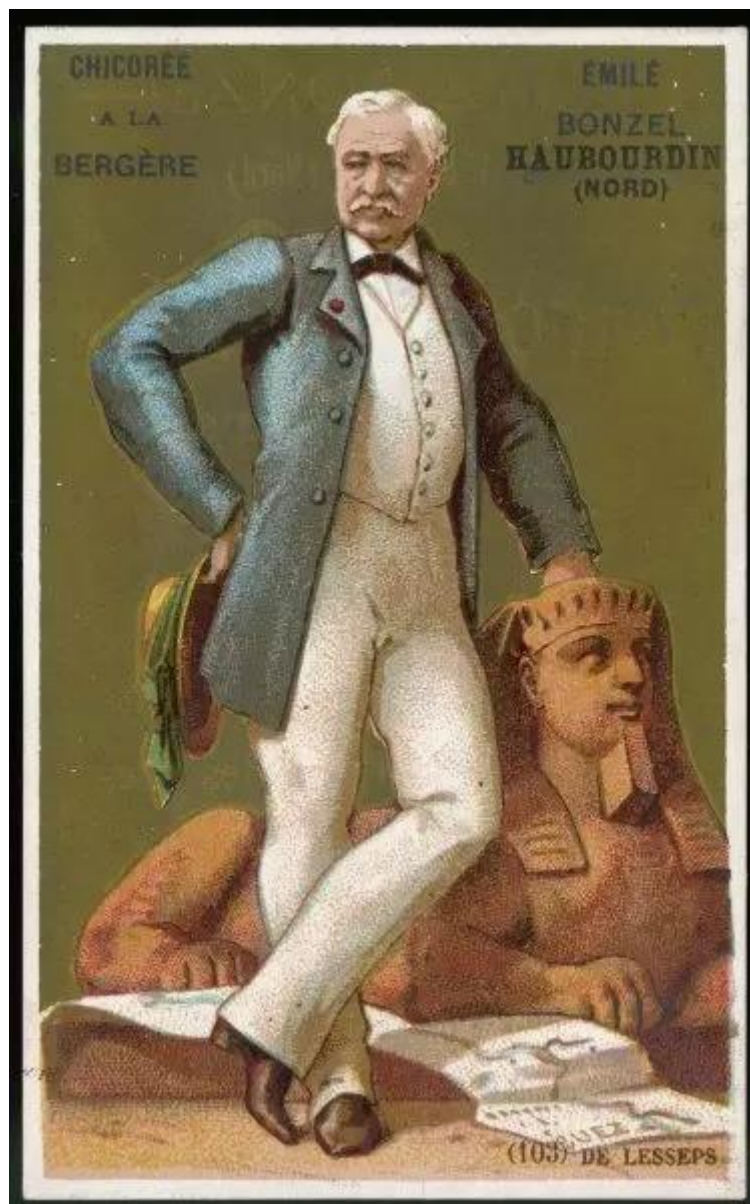
### Khedivate of Egypt (1867–1914)

Egypt was granted the status of Khedivate (autonomous vassal state) in 1867, which was to remain in place until 1914 although the Ottomans had neither presence nor power.

The construction of the Suez Canal was the greatest achievement of the Khedivate. The Canal is an artificial sea-level waterway connecting the Mediterranean Sea to



the Red Sea through the Isthmus (a narrow piece of land) dividing Africa and Asia. In 1858, the French diplomat Ferdinand Marie Count de Lesseps formed the Suez Canal Company to excavate a canal connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The construction began on April 25, 1859, and was completed in ten years. According to multiple sources, at least 30,000 people worked on-site at any given time, and about 1.5 million people of different nationalities were involved in construction. It was officially opened on November 17, 1869. Egypt, France, and Britain jointly owned the canal until 1956, when it was nationalized by President Gamal Abdel Nasser.



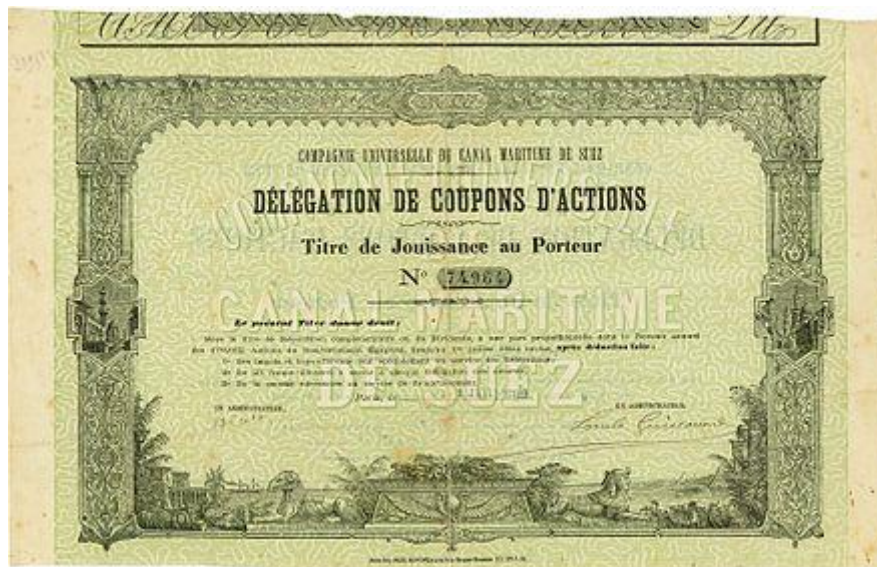
Ferdinand Marie Count de Lesseps

Credit: prints-online.com

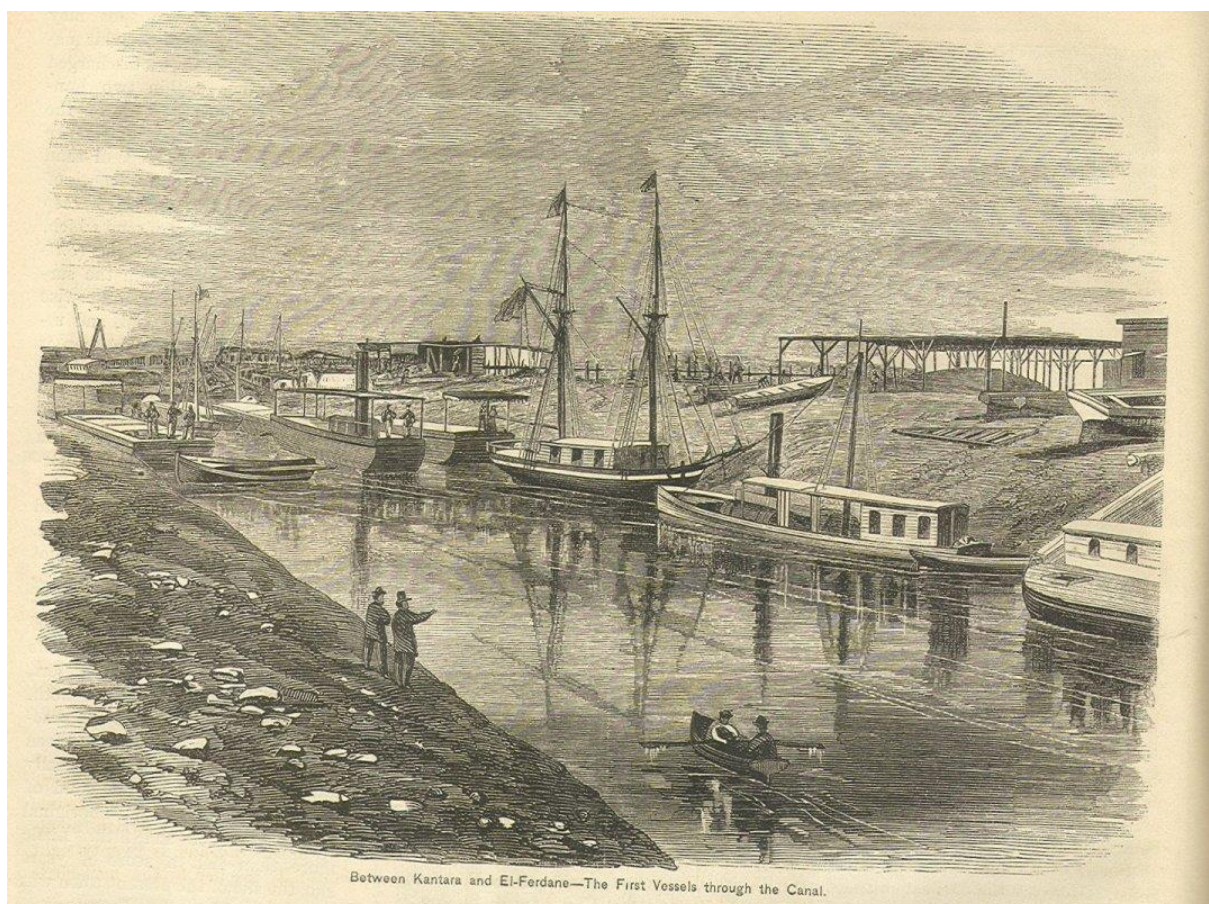


The Suez Canal Source: Credit: worldatlas.com





Share Certificate of the *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez* Credit: wikiwand.com

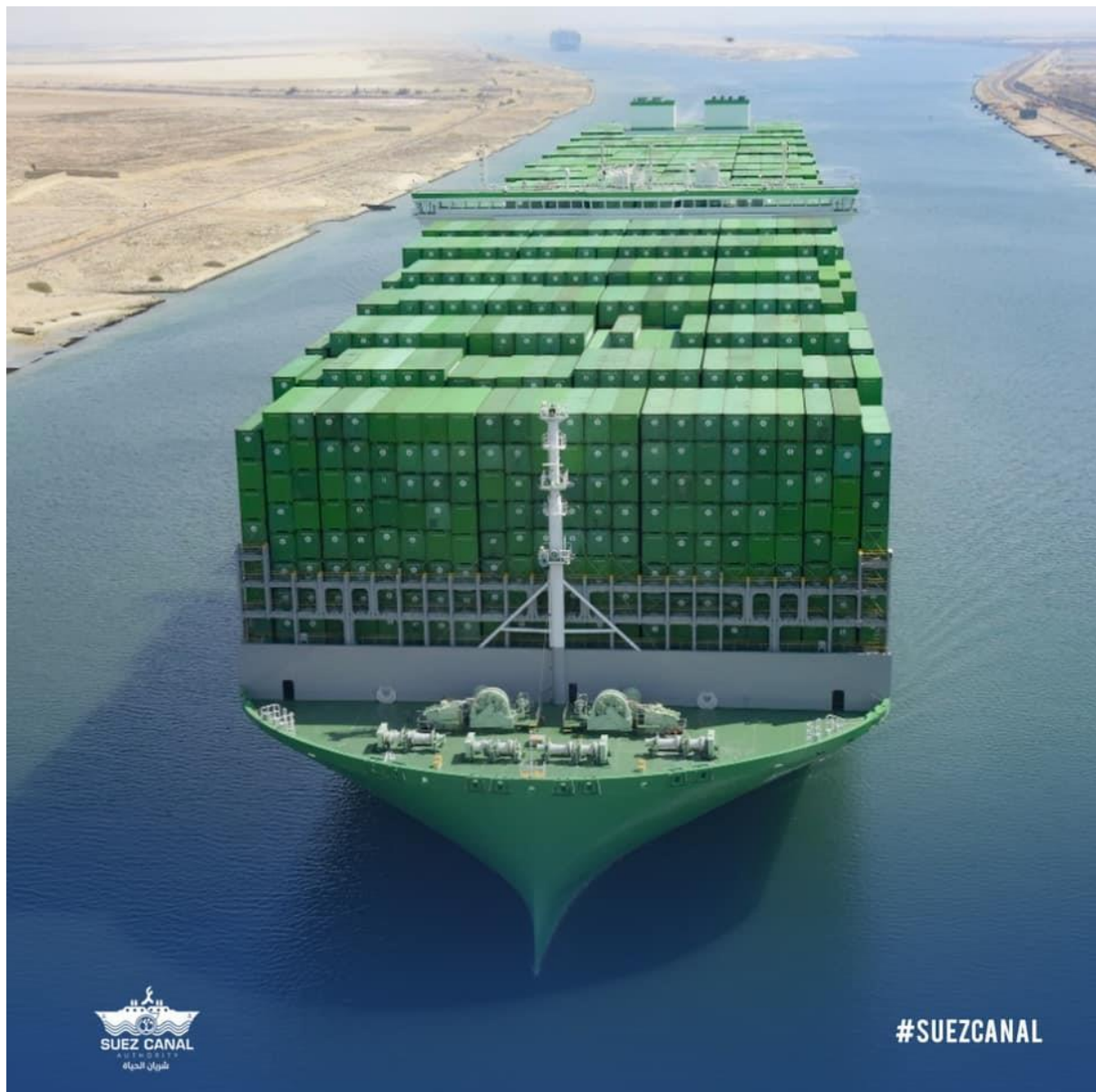


Suez Canal, 1869, Credit: wikipedia.org



Tewfik Pasha, Khedive, Credit: twitter.com





World's largest containership crossing through Suez Canal Credit: offshore-energy.biz

In 1882, opposition to European control gave rise to tension among the native elites, especially, the army personnel. A large military demonstration in September 1881 forced the Khedive Tewfik Pasha to dismiss his Prime Minister Nubar Pasha. In April 1882, France and Great Britain sent warships to Alexandria to bolster the Khedive, which spread fear of invasion in the country. By June 1882, Egypt was in the hands of nationalists opposed to European domination. The Battle of Tel El Kebir was fought on 13 September 1882, in which the Egyptian army was defeated by the British army led by Lt. Gen. Garnet Wolseley. With this decisive victory, in which the British lost only 57 troops (they had more casualties due to heatstroke than enemy action), while killing more than two thousand Egyptian troops, the British occupied Egypt until the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1922.



Battle of Tel-el-Kebir Credit: britishbattles.com

With the Unilateral Declaration of Egyptian Independence on 28 February 1922 the British government recognised Egypt as an independent sovereign state, ending its convoluted status: Simultaneously, a *de jure* vassal state of the Ottoman Empire and a *de facto* independent state.



Sultan Fuad I, Credit: royalark.net



Following independence from the British, Sultan Fuad I assumed the title of King of Egypt and Sovereign of Nubia, Sudan and Darfur; despite being 'independent', Egypt was still under British occupation.

In 1936, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was concluded and the British troops withdrew from Egypt, except for the Suez Canal.

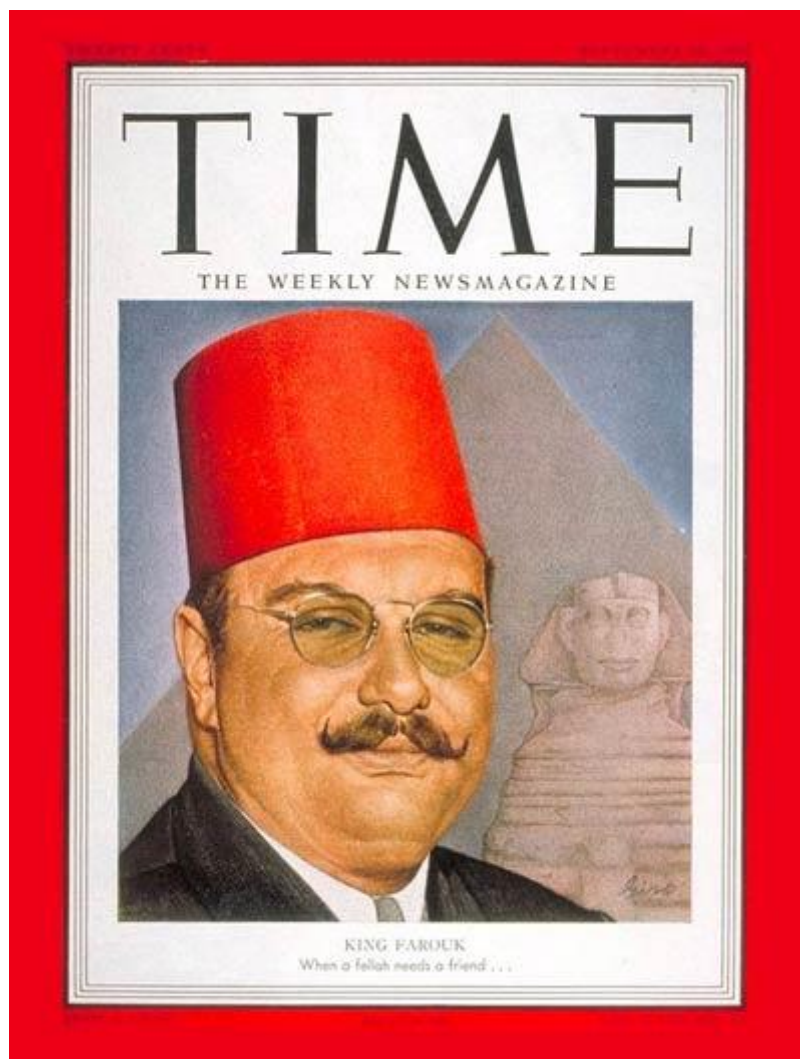
Britain used Egypt as a base for Allied operations throughout the region in the World War II, especially for the battles in North Africa against Italy and Germany. Egypt played a minor role in the War. When the War began in September 1939, Egypt declared martial law and broke off diplomatic relations with Germany. The following year, it broke diplomatic relations with Italy.

Most British troops were withdrawn to the Suez Canal area in 1947 but nationalist, anti-British feelings continued to simmer after the World War II. Anti-monarchy sentiments further increased, following the shocking performance of the Kingdom in the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49. The 1950 election saw a landslide victory of the nationalist Wafd Party and Mostafa El-Nahas became Prime Minister again. In 1951, Egypt abrogated the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 and ordered British troops to leave the Suez Canal.



Mostafa El-Nahas, Credit: wikipedia.org

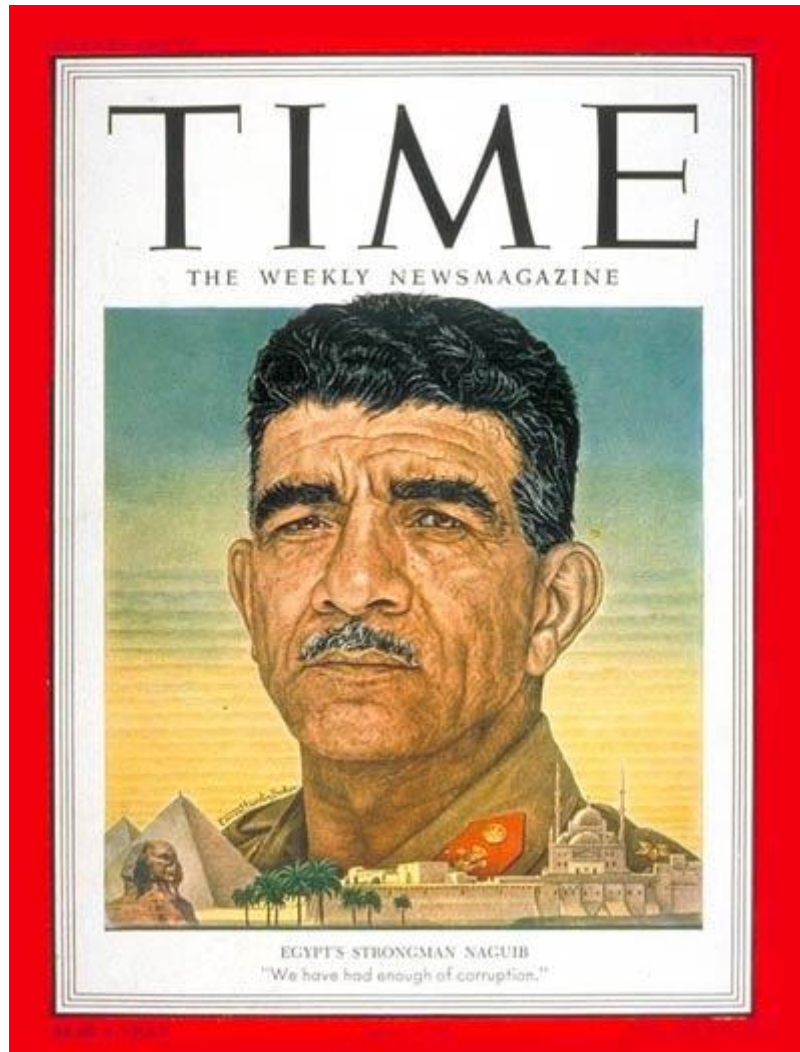
As the British refused to leave their base around the Suez Canal, the Egyptian government cut off water supply and refused to allow food into the base, forbade Egyptian workers from entering it, turning the area around the Canal into a low-level war zone. On 24 January 1952, Egyptian guerrillas staged a fierce attack on the British forces around the Suez Canal, with the support of the Egyptian police. In response, on 25 January, General George Erskine sent out British tanks and infantry to surround the police station in Ismailia and gave the policemen an hour to surrender their arms on the ground that they were arming the guerrillas. The resulting battle saw the police station levelled and 43 Egyptian policemen killed, along with 3 British soldiers. The Ismailia incident outraged Egypt. The next day, 26 January 1952 was 'Black Saturday', as the anti-British riot came to be known, in which much of downtown Cairo was torched. King Farouk blamed the Wafd for the Black Saturday riot, and dismissed Nahas as Prime Minister the next day. He was replaced by Aly Maher Pasha.



King Farouk, Credit: time.com



On 22 – 23 July 1952, the Free Officers Movement, led by Maj. Gen. Muhammad Naguib and Lt. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser, launched a coup d'état (known as the Egyptian Revolution of 1952) against King Farouk I, who abdicated the throne to his son Fouad II, a seven-month baby. The Royal Family left Egypt some days later and the Council of Regency, led by Prince Muhammad Abdel Moneim was formed; the Council, however, had no powers and the Revolutionary Command Council, led by Naguib and Nasser assumed power.



Maj. Gen. Muhammad Naguib, Credit: time.com

Disappointment at the lack of immediate gains led to workers' riots in Kafr Dawar (near Alexandria) on 12 August 1952 and the Revolutionary Command Council abrogated monarchy and declared Egypt a Republic on 18 June 1953. Naguib was declared President and Nasser became Prime Minister.



Credit: time.com

Naguib was forced to resign in 1954 by Nasser, the real architect of the 1952 revolution and was put under house arrest. After Naguib's resignation, the position of President was kept vacant till the election of Nasser in 1956. Nasser became President in June 1956. British forces completed withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone on 13 June 1956. The Suez Canal was nationalized on 26 July 1956. Nasser was implacably opposed to Israel and his strident nationalism started the Second Arab-Israeli War of 1967, in which Israel (with support from France and the United Kingdom) occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the Canal.

During the first four days of the war, the Arab world believed the fake media stories of imminent Arab victory. On 9 June 1967, Nasser appeared on television to inform the citizens of Egypt's defeat. He also announced his resignation, but Vice President Zakaria Mohieddin refused to accept it. Hundreds of thousands of sympathizers poured into the streets in mass demonstrations throughout Egypt and across the Arab world rejecting his resignation, chanting, "*We are your soldiers, Gamal!*" Nasser withdrew his resignation the next day.

The war came to an end on 10 June 1967 because of US and USSR intervention with the restoration of status quo. The greatest casualty of the war was the loss of prestige of Egypt and especially of Nasser in the Arab world. Nasser died on 28



September 1970 of heart attack at the age of 52, at the end of the Arab League summit, hours after escorting the last Arab leader in ceremonial departure.

Time magazine in its obituary wrote that despite his mistakes and shortcomings, Nasser '*imparted a sense of personal worth and national pride that Egypt and the Arabs had not known for 400 years. This alone may be enough to balance his flaws and failures.*'

Historian Steven A. Cook wrote in July 2013, '*Nasser's heyday still represents for many, the last time that Egypt felt united under leaders whose espoused principles met the needs of ordinary Egyptians.*' As recently as the Arab Spring (2010-12), during demonstrations throughout the Arab world, photographs of Nasser were raised and waived in Cairo and capitals of most Arab nations. According to journalist Lamis Andoni of Al Jazeera, Nasser remains a '*symbol of Arab dignity*'.

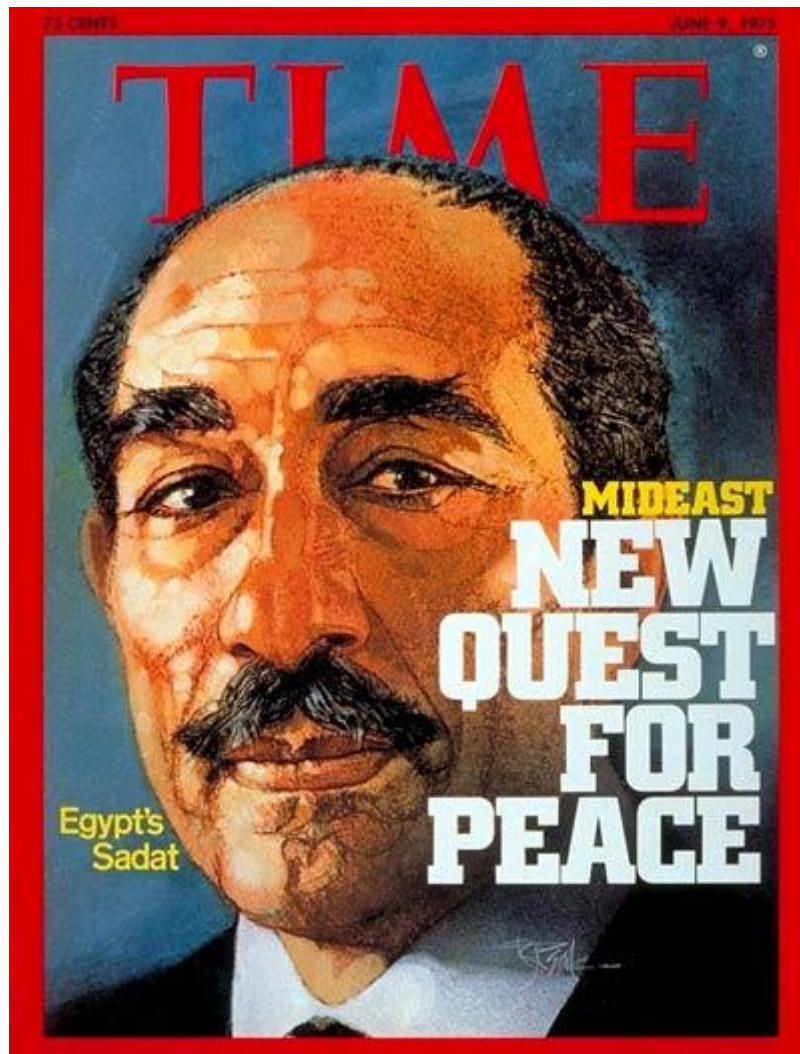
United Arab Republic (1958–1961)



Credit: omniatlas.com

In 1958, Egypt and Syria formed a sovereign state named, the United Arab Republic. The union was short-lived, ending in 1961 when Syria seceded, ending the union. During most of its existence, the United Arab Republic was also in a loose confederation with North Yemen, known as the United Arab States. In 1959, the Palestine Government was absorbed into the United Arab Republic. The Arab Socialist Union, the pan-Arab Nasserite party was founded in 1962.

President Sadat (1970–1981)



Credit: time.com

On Nasser's death in September 1970, he was succeeded by Anwar Sadat. Sadat began to re-position Egypt's policies both internally and externally. He signalled end to the allegiance to the Soviet Union by expelling Soviet advisors in 1972. He launched the Infitah (Open Door) economic reform policy, while clamping down on all opposition, both religious and secular.

In 1973, Egypt, along with Syria, launched the Fourth Arab-Israeli War (Yom Kippur War), in a surprise attack to regain part of the Sinai territory that Israel had captured in the Six Day War in 1967. The victory allowed him to regain the Sinai territory in return for peace with Israel.



In 1975, Sadat moved Nasser's economic policies to the right, to reduce government control and to encourage foreign investment. This policy attracted some investors, but investments came mainly in low risk and profitable ventures like tourism and construction. Sadat's policy was intended to benefit the middle class, but the gains were captured by the upper class. The elimination of subsidies on basic foodstuffs, led to the famous 1977 Bread Riots.

In his eleven years as president, Sadat changed Egypt's trajectory, departing from the political and economic philosophy of Nasserism, re-instituting a multi-party system, and launching liberal economic policy. His Yom Kippur War of 1973 to successfully regain the Sinai Peninsula, made him a hero in Egypt and for a brief period, in the Arab World. His engagement with Israel, culminating in the Peace Treaty won him and Menachem Begin the Nobel Peace Prize, making him the first Muslim Nobel laureate. The treaty, though favourably received by most Egyptians, was rejected by the Muslim Brotherhood and the left parties, which felt Sadat had abandoned the Palestine cause. The Arab world and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) could not reconcile with Sadat's efforts to make a separate peace with Israel without their approval. His refusal to reconcile with them over the Palestinian issue resulted in Egypt being suspended from the Arab League from 1979 to 1989. The peace treaty with Israel was also, the primary factor for his assassination on 6 October 1981.

President Mubarak



Credit: religiondispatches.org

Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak (4 May 1928 – 25 February 2020) served as the fourth president of Egypt from 1981 to 2011, after the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

Mubarak was a career officer in the Egyptian Air Force, rising to the rank of Air Chief Marshal in 1973. Mubarak's presidency lasted 30 years, making him Egypt's longest-serving ruler since Muhammad Ali Pasha, who ruled the country for 43 years from 1805 to 1848.

President Mubarak was re-elected in referendums of 1987, 1993, and 1999. In each referendum, he was the only candidate. In the 2005 election however, for the first time, he had an opposition candidate, but as he controlled the electoral machinery and more importantly, the security forces, he was declared the winner. In a move seen as vengeful persecution, Ayman Nour, the candidate for the El-Ghad party ("Tomorrow party") was convicted of forgery and sentenced to five years' hard labour.



Credit: northafricapost.com

Mary Anne Weaver, writing in the October 2003 issue of the Atlantic, recalled an astonishing remark on national TV, made by Mubarak during the Cairo International Book Fair. A prominent writer asked him if it was true that in an effort to avert war in Iraq, Saudi Arabia had attempted to persuade Saddam Hussein to step down. Mubarak, a man of stolid demeanour and few words, looked genuinely startled. *"Impossible!"* he replied. *"No President ever steps down!"*

In February 2011, ABC News reported that the personal wealth of Mubarak and his family was between US \$40 billion and US \$70 billion, gains made from military contracts made during his tenure in the Air Force. The Guardian also reported that Mubarak and his family might be worth \$70 billion made from corruption, bribes



and some legitimate business activities. The money was said to be in various bank accounts in Switzerland and the UK.



Hosni and Suzanne Mubarak, Credit: alchetron.com



Mubarak family, Credit: naharnet.com

In February 2011, ABC News reported that the personal wealth of Mubarak and his family was between US \$40 billion and US \$70 billion, gains made from military contracts made during his tenure in the Air Force. The Guardian also reported that Mubarak and his family might be worth \$70 billion made from corruption, bribes and some legitimate business activities. The money was said to be in various bank accounts in Switzerland and the UK.

On 11 February, 2011 Mubarak relinquished office and transferred authority to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. On 12 February 2011, the government of Switzerland announced freeze of the Swiss bank accounts of Mubarak and his family.

On 20 February 2011, the Prosecutor General ordered freeze of the assets of Mubarak, his Welsh-Egyptian wife Suzanne, sons Ala'a and Gamal and daughters-in-law.

On 2 June 2012, an Egyptian court sentenced him to life imprisonment, his condition worsened after that.

On 21 May 2014 a Cairo court convicted Mubarak and his sons of embezzling the equivalent of US \$17.6 million of state funds which were allocated for renovation and maintenance of presidential palaces but were instead diverted to upgrade private family homes. The court ordered the repayment of US \$17.6 million, fined the trio US \$2.9 million, sentenced Mubarak to three years in prison and his sons to four years each.

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The Court of Appeals, on the plea of Mubarak and his family ordered a retrial, but he and his sons were convicted again on 9 May 2015 and given prison sentences. Mubarak was detained in a military hospital. However, on a second appeal, he was acquitted on 2 March 2017 by the same Court of Appeals and was released on 24 March 2017.



Credit: thaipbsworld.com

Mubarak died on 25 February 2020, aged 91.



Mubarak was considered anti-Semitic in some quarters and during his reign, Egypt's relations with Israel were frosty. At the same time, he was staunchly against Islamic fundamentalism. Unsurprisingly, he was the target of at least six assassination attempts.

Egypt's heavy dependence on the US military and economic aid made it a natural ally of the US in the 1991 Gulf War. Egyptian infantry was the first to land in Kuwait to remove Iraqi forces. A grateful George W. Bush and his coalition allies reportedly, forgave \$20 billion worth of debt.

Hosni Mubarak reaffirmed Egypt's relationship with Israel and eased tensions with its Arab neighbours. Domestically, Mubarak faced serious problems. Even though agriculture and industrial production increased, the economy could not keep pace with the uncontrolled population growth. Mass poverty and unemployment forced rural families to move to the cities like Cairo where they ended up in crowded slums, barely managing to survive.

#### President Morsi (2012–2013)

Mohamed Morsi was elected President on 24 June 2012. This little known, uncharismatic engineer used to be jokingly referred to as 'spare tire' (*al-stebn*), when the Muslim Brotherhood brought him out to represent their Islamist cause. Morsi got Ph.D. in material sciences, from the University of Southern California and taught briefly at California State University. Reportedly, he was turned off by some of the American social practices, especially the casual ways of social interaction.

On 18 March 2012, Peter Hessler of the New Yorker met with Sobhi Saleh, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt's parliament and he asked Saleh if the Brotherhood would field a candidate for the President. "Never," Saleh said. "We are not seeking power." Five days later, the Brotherhood announced that they would field a candidate.

Like other Brotherhood leaders, Morsi sang praises of democracy and presented a liberal face to members of the foreign media, but, in front of local audiences, he spoke without inhibitions. He referred to Israel's citizens as "killers and vampires." He often stated his belief that neither a woman nor a non-Muslim should ever become Egypt's President. On the suicide attack on the World Trade Centre on 9/11, he expressed his view that "Something must have happened from the inside." To his audience, it meant only one thing: the culprits had to be Jews.

Writing in Washington Post on 3 July 2013, Farid Zakaria wrote, *'Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood have been deceptive, avaricious and venal. The party promised that it would neither run for the presidency nor seek a parliamentary majority. It reneged on both pledges. It rushed through a constitution that was deficient in many key guarantees of individual rights. It*

*has allowed discrimination and even violence against the Coptic Christian minority in Egypt. It has tried to shut down its opposition, banning members of Mubarak's old party from all political offices in Egypt for life.'*



Credit: time.com

On 30 June 2013, protests across Egypt erupted calling for President Morsi's resignation from office. Simultaneously, Morsi's supporters held a sit-in in Rabaa Al-Adawiya square.

On 1 July, the Armed Forces issued a 48-hour ultimatum that gave the country's political parties until 3 July to meet 'the demands of the Egyptian people'. They also threatened to intervene if the dispute was not resolved by then. All Ministers except the ones belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, resigned the same day.

On 2 July, Morsi publicly rejected the Army's 48-hour ultimatum and vowed to pursue his own plans for national reconciliation to resolve the political crisis.

On 3 July, Abdul Fatah al-Sisi, Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces removed Morsi from office and appointed Adly Mansour, head of the Constitutional Court, the Interim President of Egypt.





Clashes at Rabaa al-Adawiya Mosque, Cairo, August 14, 2013, Credit: nybooks.com



Credit: time.com





Credit: time.com

Demonstrations, sit-ins, and clashes between supporters of Morsi and the security forces followed, the most violent confrontation resulting in the Rabaa massacre.

On 14 August 2013, Egyptian security forces raided two camps of protesters in Cairo: one at al-Nahda Square and a bigger one at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square. The two sites had been occupied by supporters of Morsi and following the raids, the camps were cleared out within hours. The raids were described by Human Rights Watch as "one of the world's largest killings of demonstrators in a single day". According to Human Rights Watch, a minimum of 904 people were killed (at least 817 in Rabaa Square and at least 87 in al-Nahda Square). The Muslim Brotherhood put the number of deaths from the Rabaa al-Adawiya Mosque sit-in alone at 2,600.

On 1 September 2013, Morsi was prosecuted for inciting deadly violence. The date for the trial was set for 4th November 2013.

On 18 December 2013, Prosecutor General referred the case to criminal court for charges of espionage, in a report titled 'The Biggest Case of Espionage in the History of Egypt'. According to prosecution, the Muslim Brotherhood, aided by Hezbollah and Hamas, was the chief reason for violence inside Egypt.

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On 29 January 2014, Morsi was tried for the second time for breaking out of jail during the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, after conspiring with foreign militant groups, like Hamas, to spread violent chaos throughout Egypt.

In November 2014, Morsi claimed that he was kidnapped on 2 July and held in captivity for four months. The claim was promptly denied by the government.

Amnesty International denounced the court process as 'a charade based on null and void procedures.' Turkish President Erdogan criticized Egypt and declared Morsi a Martyr; religious services were held in Istanbul.

After several postponements, in April 2015, the court convicted Morsi, along with 12 other defendants for inciting violence and for the arrest and torture of protesters. The judge handed down 20-year sentences for Morsi and others who were convicted. Further, on charges of espionage, terrorism, and prison-break Morsi was sentenced to death on 16th May along with 105 others.

In June 2016, Morsi was given another life sentence for passing state secrets to Qatar. However, in November 2016, the Court of Appeals overturned Morsi's death penalty on the spying charges.

On 17 June 2019 Morsi collapsed during a court hearing on espionage charges at Cairo's Tora prison complex and reportedly died of a heart attack.

For his final words, he quoted a poem,

*"My country is dear to me,  
even if it oppressed me,  
and  
my people are honourable,  
even if they were unjust to me".*

He was buried in Cairo alongside other senior figures of the Muslim Brotherhood.





Credit: latestbloomer.uskoa.com

On 26 March 2014, Field Marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Minister of Defence retired, announcing his candidacy for the 2014 presidential election. The election, held in May 2014, recorded a win for el-Sisi who received 97% of the vote. El-Sisi was sworn in as President of Egypt on 8 June 2014.



President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, Credit: cfr.org

Gilad Wenig, writing in the Foreign Affairs magazine issue of 31 October 2014 under the caption, 'Egypt's Army of God: The Largest Arab Military Isn't as Secular as It Seems', revealed that a few weeks before he resigned his position as Egypt's defence minister to run for the presidency, el-Sisi participated in the Friday prayers at the Air Defence Force Mosque. He was accompanied by the army's Chief of Staff, and top leaders of the Egypt's military, political, and religious institutions. Ali Gomaa, the former grand mufti of Egypt, delivered the sermon. *"Egypt is a country that God Almighty mentioned in the Quran unlike any other,"* Gomaa said, addressing the crowd. *"We are an army that Prophet Muhammad has blessed and made its soldiers the best on the planet and blessed it,"* he added.



Credit: middleeastmonitor.com

Indeed, when Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood-sponsored leader became president in 2012, he made el-Sisi the defence minister, and the media was rife with reports that he was chosen because of his religious orthodoxy (el-Sisi's wife wears hijab). There was rampant speculation that perhaps el-Sisi was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and that with his newly acquired power, he would Islamize or, *'Brotherhood-ize'* the armed forces.

Soon after his appointment, El-Sisi, overturned the ban on prayers during military exercises that former President Hosni Mubarak had imposed. *“Pray as you please,”* he was quoted as saying, in a move hailed widely by the Islamists. In November 2012, he told a gathering of 1,500 military and police officers that *“Allah has singled us out for a great mission,”* citing supporting verses from the Quran. Around the same time, the Director of the Military Academy in Cairo announced that the Academy would, for the first time, begin accepting students belonging to families affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood (including Morsi’s nephew). Till then, the military had rejected recruits who openly displayed religious beliefs, to curb infiltration by Islamists.

El-Sisi believes that Islam should play a central role within the armed forces.

His religious upbringing appears to have prepared him for it.

When el-Sisi was a young soldier, President Sadat was eager to build the Islamists as a counterweight to the Nasserites and in doing so, he allowed them entry in the armed forces.

Charles Krauthammer wrote in the Washington Post on 22 August 2013, *‘Egypt today is a zero-sum game. The US would have preferred a democratic alternative. Unfortunately, there is none. The choice is binary: the country will be ruled by the Muslim Brotherhood or by the military.’*

El-Sisi’s policies stabilized Egypt. Writing in the Foreign Affairs magazine, Eric Trager on 21 July 2015 opined, *‘Egypt is more politically stable now, than it has been in years. Unlike the divided regimes that collapsed in the face of mass protests in January 2011 and June 2013, the el-Sisi regime is internally unified.’* The Egyptian people seem to have chosen a repressive regime over the Muslim brotherhood.

El-Sisi claims to be a democrat, but prefers elections without real opposition. He has focused on blocking political challenge to his presidency. In late 2017, he declared his candidacy for a second term. Mubarak’s last prime minister - and ex-general who lost the presidential election in 2012, Ahmad Shafiq declared that he would oppose el-Sisi.

Shafiq vanished from the United Arab Emirates, where had been living in exile since losing the 2012 presidential race to Morsi, giving birth to speculation that he had been kidnapped or deported. Early January 2018, Shafiq announced via Twitter that he had abandoned the race.

Days later, former Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Sami Anan announced that he would contest the presidential election. He was arrested soon thereafter for running for office without official permission, as required by a November 2011 decree.





Ahmed Shafiq, Credit: timesofisrael.com

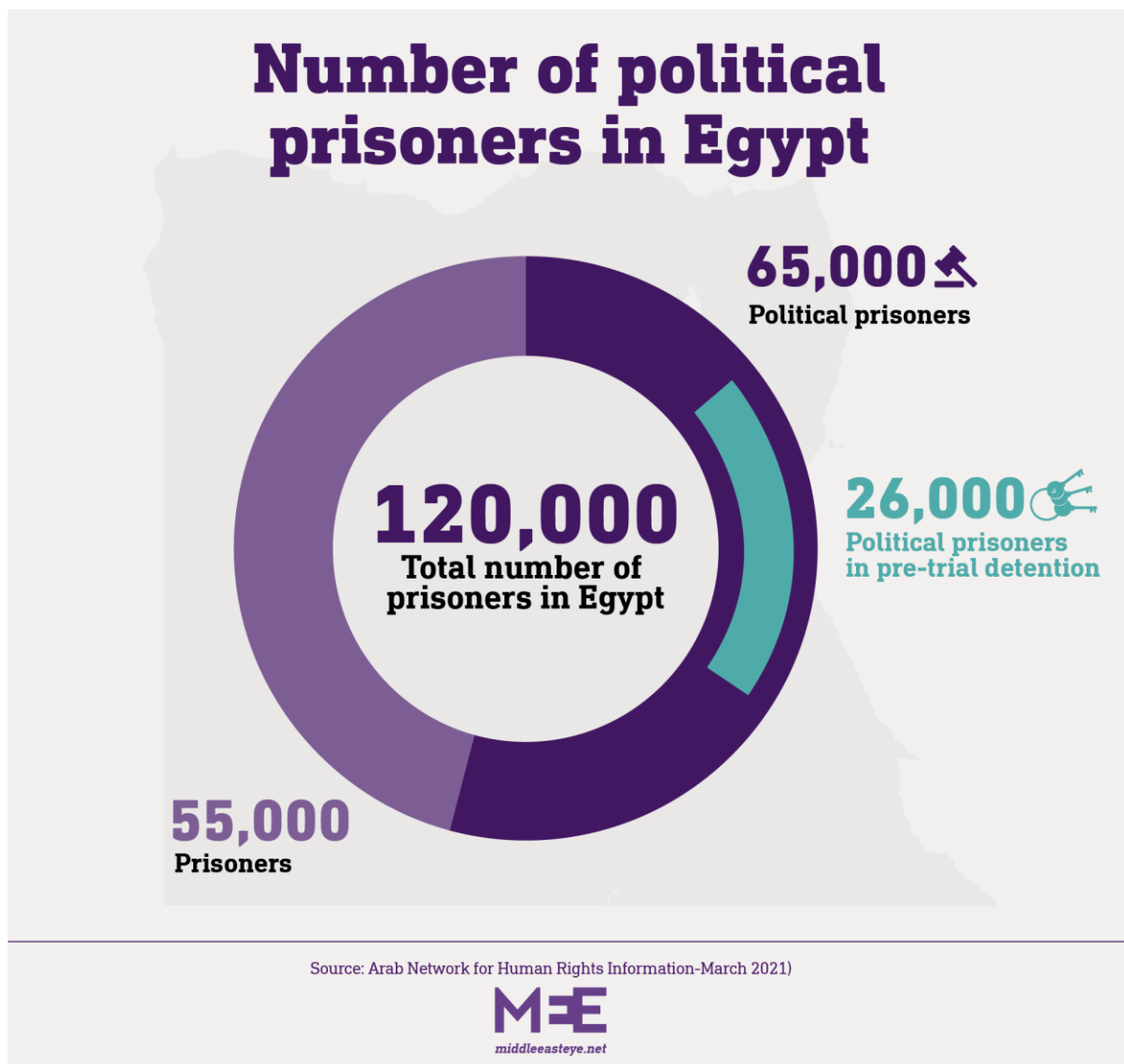


General Sami Anan, Credit: alaraby.co.uk

El-Sisi has been President since 2014, having won two elections. He faces an election in 2024 but could govern until 2030. He seems to have support from Egypt's business elite, and controls the pervasive state network established by the former President Hosni Mubarak. The opponents of el-Sisi are too weak to oppose him. There is of course, some opposition from the Muslim Brotherhood, but it is doubtful if they can muster enough support to pose a credible challenge to his authority.



El-Sisi denies that his regime is holding any political prisoners. But human rights organizations estimate the number of political prisoners at 120,000. More shocking is the number of those in ‘pretrial’ detention: 55,000. Pre-trial detention is a practice sanctioned by courts and the Egyptian authorities have expanded it and abused it, to keep in jail for years, those it cannot convict. And in the rare cases when the courts order release of prisoners, the police immediately detain them again under new charges, in what has been called, ‘revolving door’ policy.



Credit: middleeasteye.net

El-Sisi's Egypt faces many problems, the key ones are:

- Muslim Brotherhood
- Dispute with Libya
- Dispute with Sudan
- Dispute with Ethiopia over the Renaissance dam
- Coptic Christians
- New Capital

### Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni Islamist religio-socio-political movement is the largest, best-organized political force in Egypt, with membership estimated to be between 2 and 2.5 million. Founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna (14 October 1906 – 12 February 1949) in March 1928, the group has spread to other Muslim countries but its largest organization is in Egypt, despite a succession of government crackdowns in 1948, 1954, 1965, and 2013.

Al-Banna's writings revolutionized Islamic thought by developing ideology based on Islam. Al-Banna considered Islam to be a comprehensive system of life and the Quran, the only acceptable constitution. He called for Islamization of the state, the economy and the society. He believed that establishing a just society required an Islamic financial construct, where zakat would be collected and used for social causes to reduce inequality. He was critical of western materialism, British imperialism and traditionalism of the Egyptian clergy. He appealed to pan-Arab patriotism and regarded all Muslims as members of a single nation-community.



Credit: aljazeera.com



12 Pages

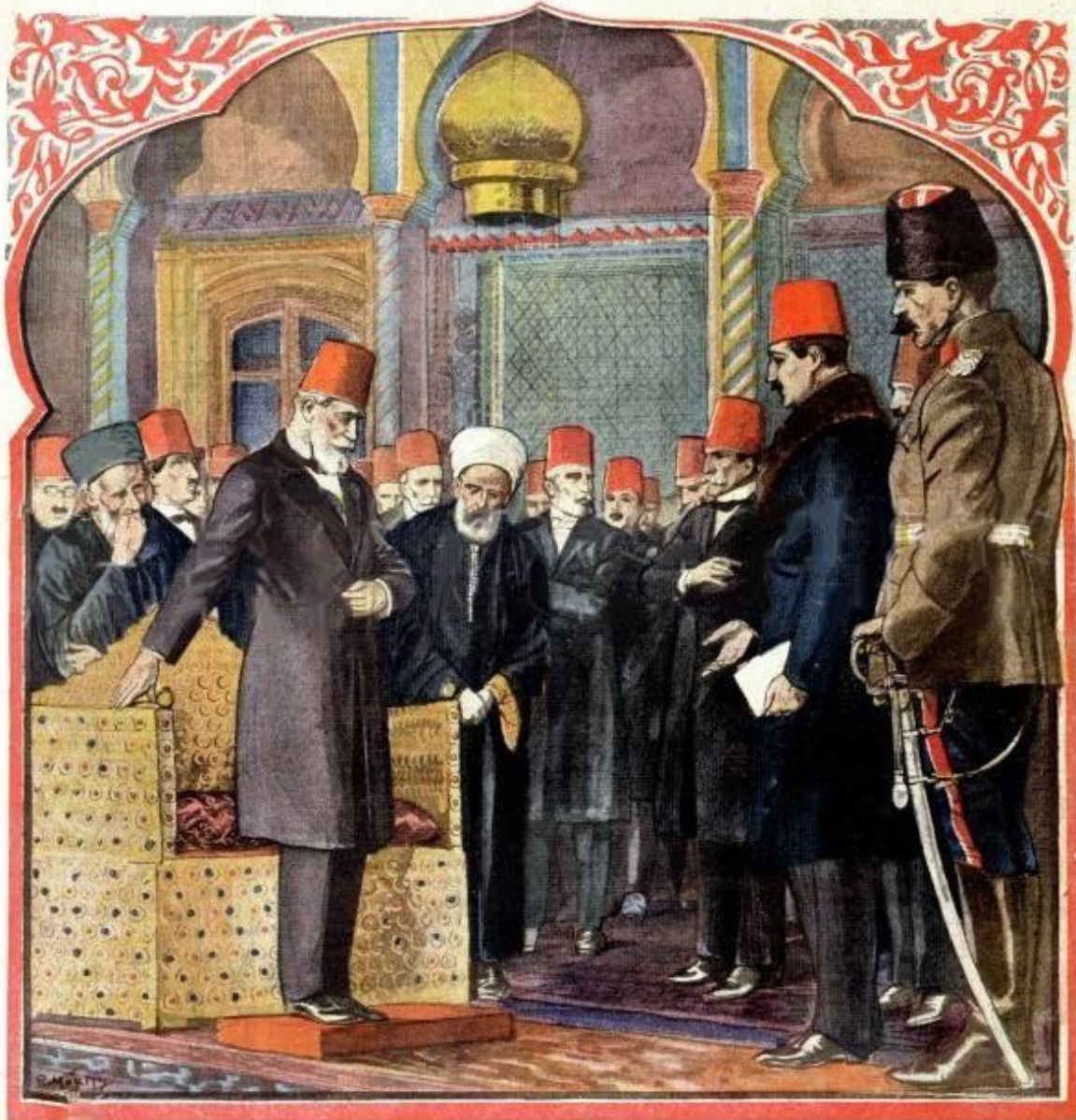
# Le Petit Journal

12 Pages

HEBDOMADAIRE  
61, rue Lafayette, Paris

illustré

PRIX : 0 fr. 30  
16 Mars 1924



## Le dernier calife

L'Assemblée d'Angora poursuit l'œuvre d'évolution de la Turquie. Après avoir proclamé la République et exilé le sultan, elle vient de rompre le dernier lien avec le passé. Abdul Medjid, qui, en qualité de calife, représentait la tradition religieuse de l'Islam, a été déposé et son pouvoir a été transféré à la République.

Credit: pinterest.com

The Ottoman Caliphate, was abolished on 3 March 1924 by decree of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Abdulmejid II was deposed as the last Ottoman Caliph, as was Mustafa Sabri as the last Ottoman shaykh al-Islām.

Following the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, al-Banna called on Muslims to prepare for armed struggle against colonial rule. Al-Banna encouraged Egyptians to abandon western customs; he argued for the state enforcement of Islamic morality through censorship and corporal punishment.

In 1941, the Muslim Brotherhood established a para-military group called the *jihaz al sirri* or 'the secret apparatus' and stockpiled weapons. In the late 1940's, the Brothers were prominent among the political factions that destabilized Egypt's political system. In December 1948, a Brother named Abdel Magid Hassan murdered Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmi Nuqrashi.

In February 1949, al Banna was assassinated while getting into a taxi in downtown Cairo.

The Brothers were alleged to be behind the attempted assassination of President Nasser in October 1954. The Brotherhood was dismantled and ceased to be a significant force in Egyptian politics until the 1970s, when they officially renounced violence.

The most notable brother Ayman Zawahiri was arrested in 1966, at the age of 15; he went on to become Osama bin Laden's deputy.



Osama bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri, Credit: bbc.com

The popular belief in the post-Mubarak Egypt was that no contender for power could ignore the Muslim Brotherhood. The reason was simple: There were just so



many of them and because of its social work, the Brotherhood had and continues to have wide and deep social networks in both urban and rural areas.

Following the 2011 Egyptian Revolution against the rule of President Hosni Mubarak, Muslim Brotherhood had its first great success with the launch of its Freedom and Justice Party to contest elections, with ‘the same mission and goals’ as the Brotherhood.

The party won almost half the seats in the 2011–12 parliamentary elections, and its candidate, Mohamed Morsi, won the June 2012 presidential election. However, President Mohammad Morsi was overthrown after mass protests within a year and a crackdown ensued: hundreds of members were killed, and hundreds more including Morsi and most of the Brotherhood's leadership were imprisoned. In September 2013, an Egyptian court banned the Brotherhood, its associations and ordered their assets to be seized; in December 2013, it was declared a terrorist group following bombing of the security directorate building in Mansoura (120 km northeast of Cairo).



Mansoura security directorate blast, Credit: ahram.org

In 2015, a split appeared in the Brotherhood between the old guard which was afraid that resorting to violence could mean the end of the Brotherhood and the new leadership, which had the support of the cadre and which believed that ‘only by bleeding’, the regime could ‘be brought to its knees.’ In May, Mahmoud Hussein, the former secretary general of the Muslim Brotherhood, reported on his Facebook page that Mahmoud Ezzat had ‘taken over’ the Muslim Brotherhood.





Mahmoud Ezzat Credit: mepei.com

Estimates of the Brotherhood's membership and supporters vary between 2 and 2.5 million. The New York Times has described it as having 'the support of millions of sympathizers.



Muslim Sisterhood members, Credit: deseret.com

The Muslim Sisterhood is the female division of the Brotherhood. The members of the Muslim Sisterhood have been traditionally more involved in charitable activities. They are credited with keeping the Brotherhood together, during the dark days of the 1950s and 1960s when many male members were imprisoned to weaken the organization, but the sisters ‘acted as an informal support network, carrying ideas and messages from prison to prison to sustain the Brotherhood, and were vital to its rebirth’.



Muslim Sisterhood members, Credit: facebook.com



Muslim Sisterhood members, Credit: pinterest.com



The mission of the Muslim Sisterhood is to attract new members to the Muslim Brotherhood. Many of these members come from university campuses, madrassas and trade unions. During the Egyptian revolution of 2011, members of the Muslim Sisterhood became politically active and contributed to the founding of the Freedom and Justice Party in April 2011.

Mokhtar Awad, writing in the February 2016 issue of the Foreign Affairs called the Muslim Brotherhood counterpart of the Salafi jihadists, whose aim was and is to establish an Islamic State and enforce Islamic law.



Credit: [blogs.lse.ac.uk](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk)

The seeds of Brotherhood jihadism, were planted early 2015, when some of its leaders informally commissioned Islamic scholars to write a sharia-based manual on violence. The result was a 93-page book titled 'The Jurisprudence of Popular Resistance to the Coup'. It was an obvious attempt at *ijtihad*, or legal reasoning, to reconcile Brotherhood creed with violence. These scholars declared that el-Sisi and his government were *ahl baghy* or seditionists, who had turned against the legitimate religious leader: Mohamed Morsi. And since el-Sisi and his government had used violence against Muslim believers, they were enemy combatants who should be slain, according to the sharia law. The authors referred to the Brotherhood founder Imam Hassan al-Banna's selection of two swords in the organization's logo, as well as his talk of 'strength,' as a justification for use of violence against the state.



In an opinion piece in the Washington Post on 29 August 2018, the late Jamal Khashoggi wrote, *'There can be no political reform and democracy in any Arab country without accepting that political Islam is a part of it'*.

El-Sisi understands that very well and is determined to ensure that Islam plays a central role within the armed forces and the Egyptian society.

### The Libyan Quagmire

Egypt and Libya have had close relations for almost three thousand years. Egypt, and Tripolitania (Western Libya) were conquered by the Umayyad Caliphate in the 7th century.

Egypt became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1517 and Libya in 1555. However, both countries had considerable autonomy. Since 1882, Egypt was nominally independent but effectively under the control of Britain, while Italy invaded and occupied Libya in 1912. The border between Libya and Egypt saw many battles between the British and the axis forces during the World War II, culminating in the Second Battle of El Alamein in October–November 1942 which eliminated the threat to the British in Egypt, with the expulsion of Italy from Libya.



Libya declared its independence with the formation of the Kingdom of Libya in December 1951 under King Idris I. In 1969, Muammar Gaddafi led a coup that ended King Idris' monarchy. Gaddafi ruled Libya for 42 years until the Libyan Civil War which led to his death on 20 October 2011, ending his rule.



King Idris, Credit: globalblackhistory.com

In June 1977 Gaddafi ordered the 225,000 Egyptians living in Libya to leave the country, accusing Egypt of planning to seize its oil fields. Several skirmishes took place along the 1100 km border and many Libyan aircraft were destroyed by the Egyptian Air Force. After four days of fighting resulting in heavy losses on both sides, they agreed to a cease-fire at the urging of Algeria's President Boumediène.

After the 1977 war, relations were hostile for over a decade. However, in October 1989, Gaddafi visited Egypt after sixteen years. In March 1990, President Mubarak and President Hafez al-Assad of Syria met with Gaddafi in Libya and by the end of 1990, relations between Libya and Egypt became normal.



The First Libyan Civil War of 2011 was fought between forces loyal to Gaddafi and rebel groups that were seeking to oust him. The war was preceded by protests in Benghazi and other cities, escalating into a civil war that spread across the country. The forces opposing Gaddafi established an interim governing body, the National Transitional Council (NTC), headed by Mustafa Jalil.

Gaddafi was captured and executed on 20 October 2011 during the Battle of Sirte by NTC forces.



Credit: allafrika.com

The Second Libyan Civil War (2014 – 2020) was fought between different armed groups, headed by the House of Representatives leadership and the Government of National Accord (GNA).

The House of Representatives faction was in control of the Eastern and Central Libya and had the support of the Libyan National Army and the recognition of Egypt and the UAE, Sudan, Syria and the Russian sponsored Wagner group.

The Government of National Accord (GNA) which was controlled by armed Islamist groups from Misrata (third largest city, in North-western Libya). The



GNA was made of two political groups, the National Forces Alliance (NFC) and the Justice and Construction Party (JCP), supported by Turkey and Qatar.

In addition to these three factions, there were the Islamist Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, led by Ansar al-Sharia, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL's) Libyan provinces; the Shura Council of Mujahideen in Derna, as well as other armed groups and militias whose allegiances often changed.



Gen. Khalifa Haftar, Credit: atalayar.com

Gen Haftar was known in Libya as a general who had fallen out with Gaddafi. In exile, he acquired American citizenship and planned Gaddafi's downfall from the CIA HQ in Langley, Virginia. Mid-2014, he launched 'Operation Dignity' deepening the split between Eastern and Western Libya.

Libya found itself with two rival governments.

Gen Haftar controlled the east from Benghazi and set about unifying the country by marching west to attack the capital Tripoli, aiming to unseat the internationally recognised Government of National Accord led by Fayeze al Sarraj.



Fayeze al Sarraj, Credit: Aljazeera.com

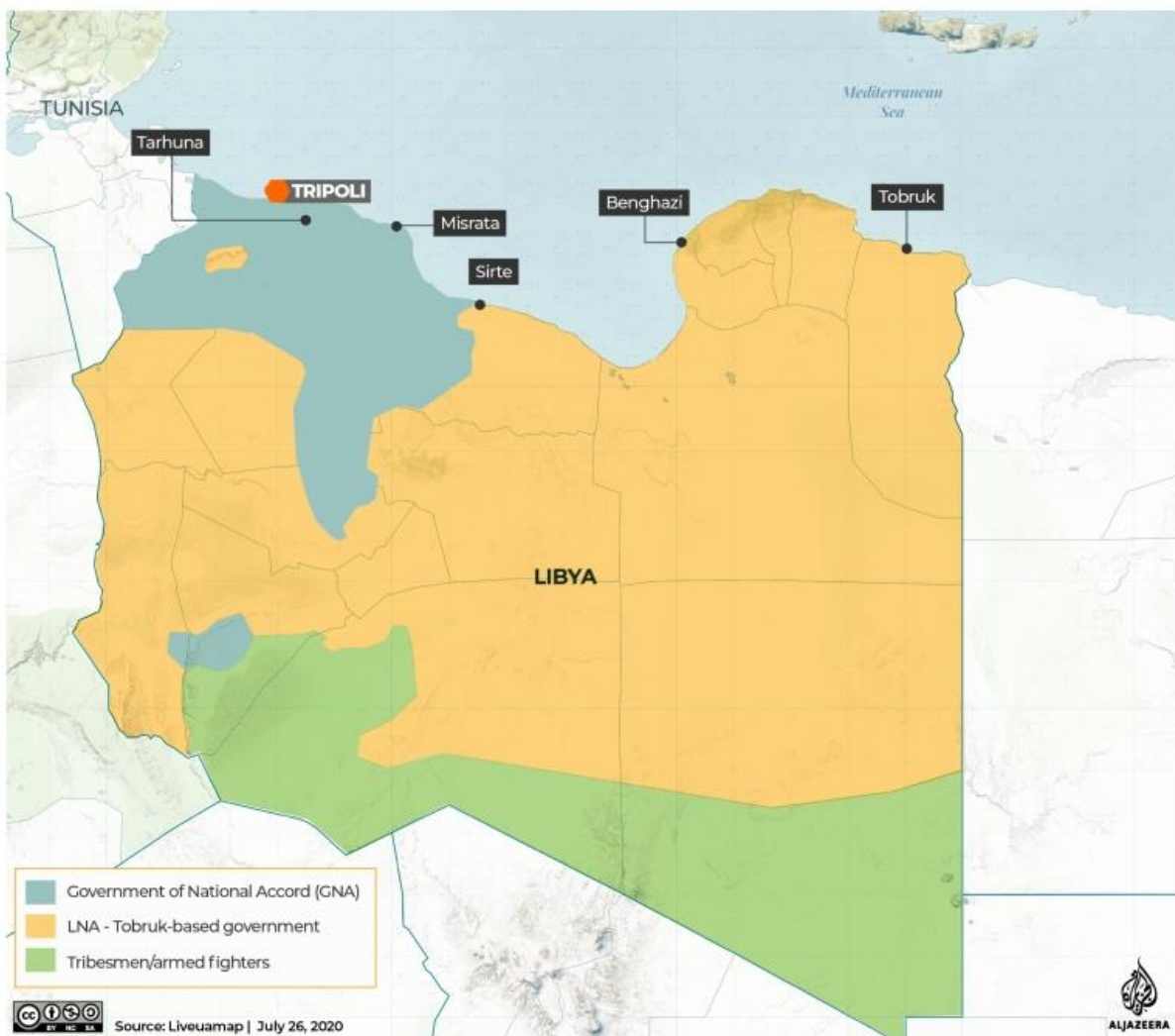
In May 2016, GNA (Government of National Accord) and GNC (General National Congress) launched a joint offensive to capture areas in and around Sirte from ISIL. This offensive resulted in ISIL losing control of all significant territories previously held in Libya.

On 23 October 2020, the Joint Libyan Military Commission representing the LNA (Libyan National Army) and the GNA (Government of National Accord) reached a 'permanent ceasefire agreement in all areas of Libya'.

## LIBYA

### Areas of control

Libya, a major oil producer, has been mired in conflict since the 2011 NATO-backed uprising against longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.



Credit: Aljazeera.com

The agreement required that all foreign fighters leave Libya within three months while a joint police force would patrol disputed areas. Abdul Hamid Dbeibah was installed in March last year as head of the U N-backed GNU and was tasked with leading the country to national elections on December 24.



Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, Credit: alarabia.net

But after months of uncertainty, the electoral commission on the eve of the polls suggested they be delayed, as a parliamentary committee tasked with overseeing the process said it was impossible to hold the vote as originally planned.

The vote was ultimately cancelled amid disputes between rival factions on laws governing the poll and disagreements over candidates. The Tobruk-based parliament, which mostly backed eastern forces during the country's war, declared the GNU invalid. Further, it appointed former interior minister Fathi Bashagha as the new prime minister, saying this was because of Dbeibah's failure to hold elections.



Fathi Bashagha, Credit: scmp.com



Bashagha flew to Tripoli from Tobruk, thanking Dbeibah for his work and pledging “to open a new chapter” and “reach out to everyone”. Soon, there was an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Bashagha, who rejected the attempts to replace him adding, he would “accept no new transitional phase or parallel authority” and would hand over power only to an elected government. Meanwhile, the speaker of the parliament Aguila Saleh wants to be the new prime minister, a move condemned by Dbeibah as "a desperate attempt to renew division" and said the GNU would continue to function until new elections are held.



Aguila Saleh, Credit: dailynewsegypt.com

He also described the parliament’s move as an attempt to enter Tripoli by force and promised to draft a new election law to solve the political crisis. The dispute has led the country back to a familiar state of affairs: two Prime Ministers and a third in the waiting and a country divided in halves — east and west. The Parliament is based in the east, which is controlled by the militia leader Khalifa Haftar, while Mr. Dbeiba’s internationally recognized government is based in the capital, Tripoli, in the west. It is unclear if foreign powers with a stake in Libya, Turkey, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates, would accept Mr. Bashagha as prime minister. Egypt’s foreign ministry expressed confidence in the ‘new government,’ but the UN continues to recognize Mr. Dbeiba.

And so it goes!

Libya is a highly desirable prize for foreign powers. It has the biggest reserves of oil and gas in Africa and a population of less than seven million. Geographically, Libya faces Europe and its hydrocarbons can be exported direct to the markets in the west through the Mediterranean. Rival producers in the Gulf need to ship their exports through risky sea lanes.

Libya's war has developed disturbing similarities with Syria's. The arbiters of the fate are the same foreigners.

The proxy wars in Libya are in many ways, an extension of the proxy wars in Syria. Both sides have flown in Syrian militias to apply the skills they have gained in almost a decade of war in their homeland. It is possible that President Erdoğan and President Putin have applied in Libya a version of the deal they have made in Syria.

The Russian mercenaries who fought with Haftar in the Second Civil War are from an organisation known as the Wagner Group, run by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close associate of Putin. The Wagner mercenaries, numbering about 6000 have previously fought in Syria.



Russia-backed Wagner group, Credit: atalayar.com

Imogen Braddick, in her article titled, 'Dogs of War' wrote in The Sun on 8 Apr 2021 that the privately-funded Wagner Group is said to have between 5,000 and 10,000 soldiers, with Russian tanks, SA-22 air defence systems, IL-76 military cargo aircraft and mine-resistant armoured vehicles and other hardware to wipe out a good-sized army.

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace was quoted as saying, *"These shadowy outfits, now supported so brazenly by well-funded and highly trained militaries, pose a complex proposition for*

*Western armed forces and the UK and its Allies will need to be prepared to challenge mercenary groups and improve resilience to their malign influences."*



UK defence secretary Wallace, Credit: henryclubs.com

The militia first came to prominence in 2014 in the eastern Ukraine war and propped up regimes in Venezuela, the Central African Republic besides, Libya with the backing of the Kremlin. It is reported that the group is often rewarded with access to natural resources. It is back in the news in the Ukraine war.

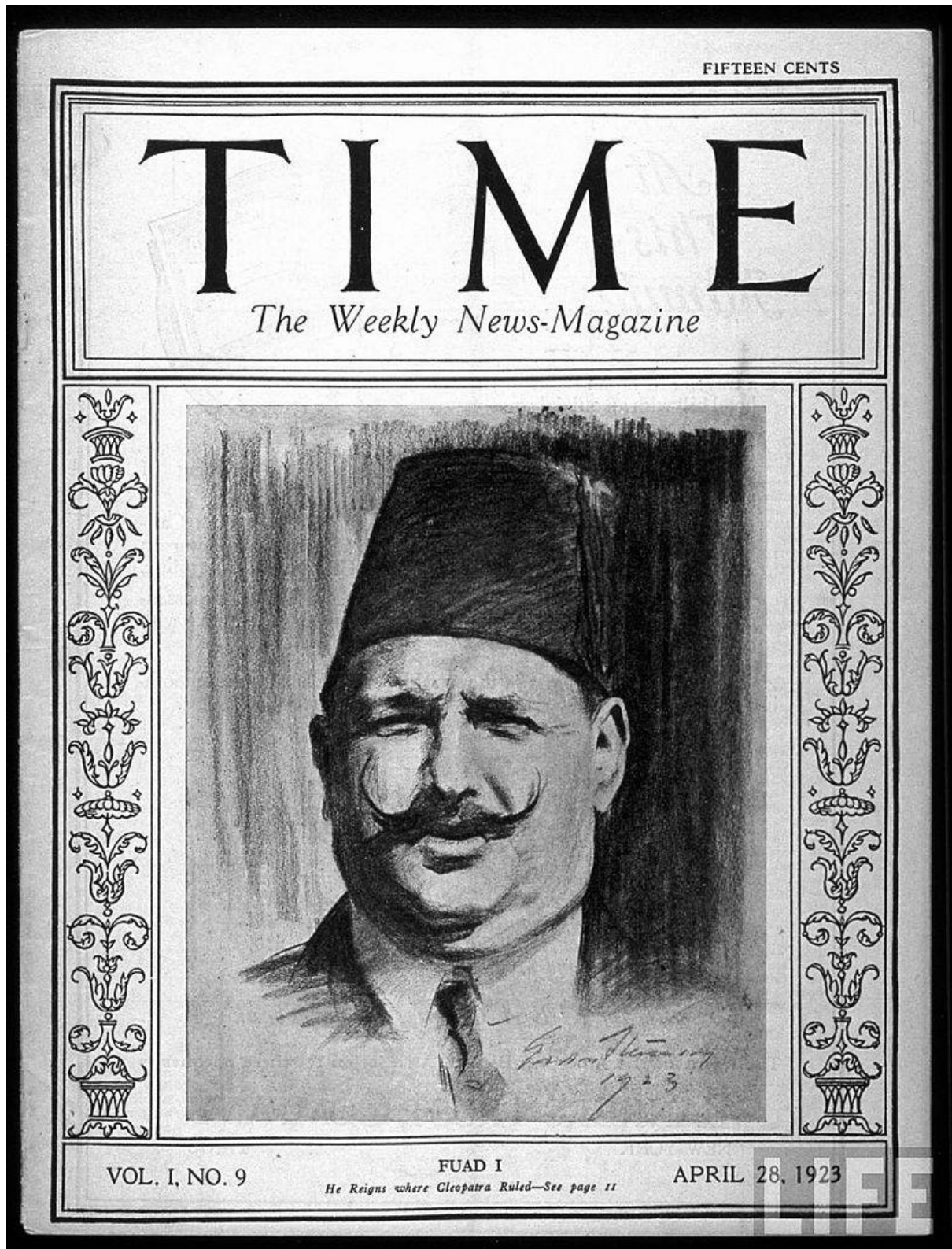
### The Sudan Problem



Maj. Gen. Charles George Gordon, Credit: artuk.org



Maj. Gen. Charles George Gordon CB (1833 – 1885), also known as Gordon Pasha wrote to Lord Granville, British Foreign Secretary on 22 January 1884:  
*"Sudan is a useless possession, ever was so, and ever will be so."*



If Egypt is the daughter of the Nile; Sudan is her handmaiden. Sudan was born in bondage and has scant heritage of its own.

Following independence from the British in 1922 (though still under British occupation), Sultan Fuad I assumed the title of King of Egypt and Sovereign of Nubia, the Sudan and Darfur.

Sudan got its independence from the British-Egyptian condominium in 1956, four years after the Egyptian Revolution of July 1952. Ismail al-Azhari became Prime Minister of the first Sudanese government. Dissatisfaction with the government culminated in a coup d'état on 25 May 1969. The coup leader, Col. Ghaffar Nimeiry became Prime Minister, abolished parliament and outlawed all political parties.

On 30 June 1989, Colonel Omar al-Bashir led a bloodless military coup. His government introduced Islamic legal code and executed many in the upper ranks of the army and the imprisoned leading political figures. On 16 October 1993, al-Bashir appointed himself President and took over all executive and legislative powers.

In the 1996 general election, he was the only candidate to run for election; Sudan became a one-party state under his National Congress Party. During the 1990's, Hassan al-Turabi, then Speaker of the National Assembly, reached out to Islamic fundamentalist groups and invited Osama bin Laden to the country. The United States subsequently listed Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism. Al-Turabi's influence began to wane, and others in favour of more pragmatic leadership tried to change Sudan's international isolation. The country worked to appease its critics by expelling members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and encouraging bin Laden to leave.

Before the 2000 presidential election, al-Turabi introduced a bill to reduce the President's powers, prompting al-Bashir to order a dissolution and declare a state of emergency. When al-Turabi urged a boycott of the President's re-election campaign signing agreement with Sudan People's Liberation Army, al-Bashir suspected they were plotting to overthrow the government. Hassan al-Turabi was jailed later the same year.

In February 2003, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and Justice and Equality Movement groups in Darfur took up arms, accusing the Sudanese government of oppressing non-Arab Sudanese in favour of Sudanese Arabs, precipitating the War in Darfur. The conflict has since been described as a genocide. On 9 January 2005, the government signed the Nairobi Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement with the objective of ending the Civil War. A peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the Eastern Front was

signed on 14 October 2006, in Asmara. On 5 May 2006, the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed, aiming at ending the three-year-long conflict.

On 19 December 2018, massive protests began after a government decision to triple the price of basic goods. There was pressure on President al-Bashir, who had been in power for more than 30 years, to step down. He retaliated by arresting more than 800 opposition figures and protesters, leading to the death of approximately 40 people according to the Human Rights Watch, although the number was much higher according to civilian reports. On 11 April 2019 the chiefs of staff decided to intervene and they ordered the arrest of President al-Bashir and declared a three-month state of emergency. The protests came to an end when the Forces for Freedom and Change (an alliance of groups organizing the protests) and Transitional Military Council (the ruling military government) signed the July 2019 Political Agreement and the August 2019 Draft Constitutional Declaration.

The year 2021 saw two coup attempts, in September and October. The October 2021 coup was led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan who declared a state of emergency.



General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Credit: cidob.org

Sudan has been in a state of endless revolution. Like many revolts in the Arab world, Sudan's was initially viewed hopefully in the West and fearfully in the Arab states, who see uprisings as threats from local forces calling for change. Many in Sudan see it going the way of Egypt. going the same way, especially after the 25 October 2021 coup. There is a reconciliation of sorts, with General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan heading the Sovereign Council, the military-civilian body with Prime



Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Sudan remains in a state of emergency, and the treasury is close to running out of reserves.



Abdalla Hamdok, Credit: theowp.org

The Egypt-Sudan dispute over the Halaib triangle was responsible for the ‘cold war’ between the two countries, till el-Sisi’s election in 2014. During el-Sisi’s rule, the borders between the two countries have got militarized with the assertion of Egyptian sovereignty over the Halaib triangle. The reason for both countries coveting the Halaib triangle is that it is rich in natural resources, particularly manganese. An Egyptian government study estimated the reserves to be in excess of 700,000 tonnes. There is also speculation about presence of oil and gas deposits. Bir al-Tawil on the other hand, is very arid and has no resources, so neither country is interested in asserting sovereignty over it.



Currently, Egypt is in control of the Halaib triangle, whereas, till Mubarak's reign (1981-2011), it was under Sudanese control.

The relations between the two countries have seen many ups and downs and the Sudanese authorities have matched el-Sisi's hard border-security policies.

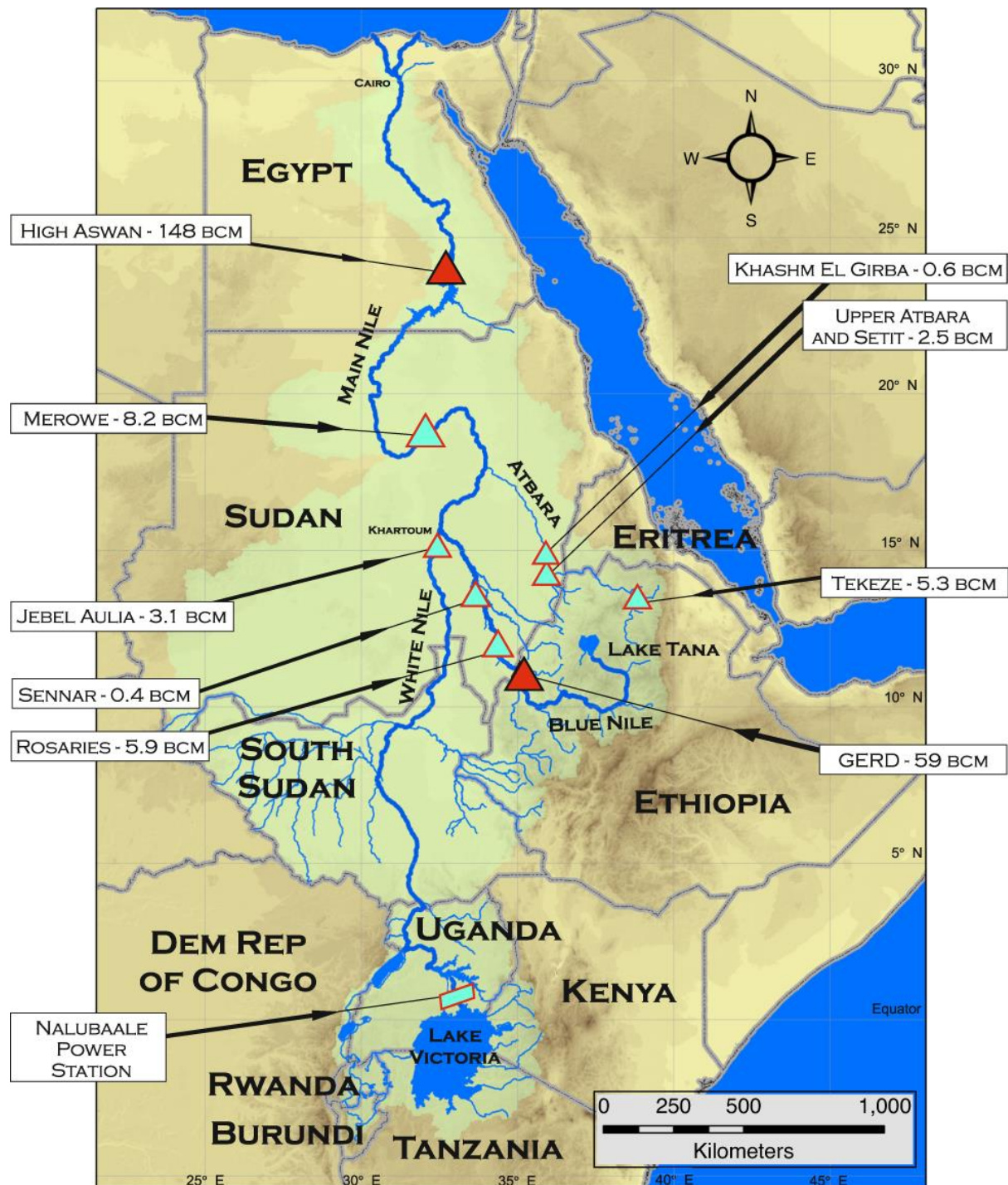
Added to this is the shift in Sudan's position on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that Egypt has vehemently opposed, as it threatens to reduce its share of the Nile waters. In this, it has resisted the good offices of the US as well as the Arab League. The mutual distrust has resulted in stricter border crossings control.

### The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

Ethiopia has a total area of 1,100,000 sq. km. and a population of about 120 million. It shares borders with Eritrea and Djibouti to the north, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south, South Sudan to the west and Sudan to the northwest.



Credit: britannica.com



BCM= Billion Cubic Meters, Credit: nature.com

The dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt over the waters of the Nile is a century old issue. Egypt gets no rainfall and its 100 million people depend, almost exclusively, on the waters of the Nile. First Italy and then Britain promised Egypt that it would receive the vast majority of the Nile water in perpetuity. A 1959 agreement between Egypt and Sudan - following Sudan's independence in 1956 -



allocated 55.5 billion cubic metres of the Nile to Egypt and 18.5 billion cubic metres to Sudan.

This suited the Egyptians, but the treaties offered nothing to the upstream states. Since 1998, the Nile Basin Initiative has been attempting to bring together the 10 states that border on the Nile to resolve the issue.

But the states - Burundi, D.R. Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, plus Eritrea as an observer - have failed to reach a consensus, primarily because of Egyptian intransigence. Ethiopia has won most of these countries to its side with the promise of electricity exports for a region that desperately needs new sources of energy. It has even offered to sell some of the dam's 5,000 MW energy to Egypt.

The Nile Basin is home to more than 200 million people. This number is set to double in the next 25 years, greatly increasing the demand for water. Egypt depends on the Nile for 98 per cent of its irrigation needs and refuses to compromise.

Egypt may be the gift of the Nile, as Herodotus once said, but the Nile is not Egypt's alone. Eleven countries share the basin of the world's longest river, which winds through much of East Africa before emptying into the Mediterranean in northern Egypt.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), about 2,250 km upstream, is a 1.1-mile-long concrete colossus, the largest hydropower plant in Africa. This vast project on the Blue Nile, close to the Sudanese border, is designed to produce hydro-electricity to be used inside Ethiopia and exported to its neighbours. But Egypt estimates that even if water is not used for irrigation, they will lose 20 per cent of the Nile water during the 3-5 years needed for Ethiopia to fill the reservoir. Anticipating droughts, it has demanded that it be filled over a decade. Ethiopia, which built the dam largely with its own money, wants the reservoir full and generating electricity as soon as the dam is complete, scheduled for 2023.

The dam spans the Nile's mightiest tributary — the Blue Nile. More than 90 percent of the water that flows into Egypt originates in Ethiopia's highlands, where gushing waterfalls feed the swift, canyon-carving river. When completed, the dam will be the 10th largest in the world and will have 13 turbines that could produce 5 gigawatts of electricity. The river flows into the plains of Sudan, where it provides nearly every drop of irrigation water and generates more than half of the country's electricity. In Sudan's capital, Khartoum, the Blue Nile merges with the White Nile, a snaking river that has passed through the swamps of South Sudan, where much of it evaporates. Blue and White together form the Upper Nile, the mighty, desert-cleaving waterway that gave birth to Pharaonic Egypt. Finally, the Nile reaches

Egypt. After passing through Egypt's own enormous dam at Aswan - only half as powerful as Ethiopia's - the waters nourish 800 miles of densely populated farmland with large market towns. Ninety-five percent of Egyptians live along the Nile or in its delta. At the megalopolis of Cairo, the river begins to fan out into a giant delta, a historically fertile region woven with canals, where the combined ill-effects of mis-management, rising population and climate change-induced water shortages are becoming frighteningly clear.



Credit: thecairoreview.com

Filling of the reservoir began in July 2020. It will take between 4 and 7 years to fill it fully, depending on hydrologic conditions during the filling period and the treaty among Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt. The second filling was completed on 19 July 2021.

As of February 2022, a team of University of Virginia researchers estimated that the GERD reservoir was less than 15 percent full based on satellite observations.

*“The reservoir was 23 percent full in September 2021, the end of the rainy season, but then water levels dropped some due to evaporation and water releases,” explained Hesham El-Askary, an earth scientist at Chapman University and one of the study co-authors. “During the first two years, we have seen a filling rate of roughly 11 percent per year, meaning it would take a little less than nine years to be completely full at this rate.”*

The third filling phase will likely begin in July 2022 and is expected to capture a larger volume of water than the first two fills. *“The first filling phase in 2020 impounded about 4.9 billion cubic meters of water and the second phase added another 6 billion cubic meters. If Ethiopia proceeds to fill the GERD in five years, the fourth and fifth fillings could exceed 25 billion cubic meters each,”* explained Essam Heggy, a NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory scientist.

Whatever the rate of filling, there will be plenty of changes to monitor from both the ground and above in the coming years. *“Aswan High Dam and GERD together are capable of retaining more than 280 percent of the Nile’s annual flow,”* said Heggy. *“The world’s longest river will be mainly driven by the operation of two dams rather than by natural processes.”*

Ethiopia started concrete construction on the body of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in April 2022, ahead of the third filling of the dam’s reservoir slated for July, amid the continued stalled negotiations with Egypt and Sudan.

This comes at a time when the two downstream countries, Egypt and Sudan, are demanding Addis Ababa to refrain from any unilateral measures with regard to filling or operating the dam’s lake, before concluding a binding agreement, for fear of seeing their water share of the Nile River shrink. Tripartite negotiations on this issue, held intermittently for a decade now, have so far failed.

Egypt fears that the operation of the GERD that Addis Ababa is building on the Blue Nile will affect its water supplies from the Nile River, on which Egypt depends for 97% of its irrigation and drinking water needs.

Abbas Sharaki, professor of geology and water resources at Cairo University, concurred. *“From the water point of view, the third filling will not affect Egypt and Sudan much, especially if this filling is limited, in light of rainfall exceeding forecasts. At the political level, elevating the height of the GERD middle corridor is a continuation of the Ethiopian policy of imposing a fait accompli and taking unilateral decisions, which is strongly rejected by both Egypt and Sudan,”* he said.

The dam is estimated to cost about 5 billion US dollars. The lack of international finance for projects on the Blue Nile River is alleged to be due to Egypt’s persistent negative campaign, to maintain its hegemony over the Nile water share. Ethiopia has been forced to finance the dam with its own resources.

To Egyptians accustomed to thinking of their country as a powerhouse of the Arab world, the idea of bowing to a historically weaker African rival has been a sobering reminder of their nation's diminished clout.



*"Now the options are very few," said Maj. Gen. (R) Talaat Mosallam. "Diplomacy is the first, but Egypt's leverage is at rock bottom and if talks fail, Egyptian military commanders may decide that it is better to die in a battle than to die of thirst".*

Egypt and Ethiopia each have more than 100 million people, double the number 30 years ago. By 2050, the combined population of the two countries is expected to rise by another 100 million, even as climate change could reduce the supply of water.

Whether the dam will contribute to water shortages in Egypt is largely a function of the eventual water-sharing agreement that Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia sign.

*"It all comes down to how much water Ethiopia will agree to release during and after a drought," said Kevin Wheeler, a hydrologist at Oxford University who has written many papers on the dam. "During the onset of a drought, Ethiopia will decide whether to continue releasing water at the same rate, thus continuing to generate power and provide downstream countries with water, or whether to fill its reservoir to ensure longer-term energy production."*

The war between Eritrea and Ethiopia have raised alarm bells in the Egyptian government, because of the stand-off on a binding legal agreement on the mechanisms of operating the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The Tigray region is home to about 7 million people out of a population of more than 100 million in Ethiopia. It is the third-largest ethnic group in the country and wants greater autonomy. It is NOT opposed to the construction of the Dam, because it believes, it is an Ethiopian project. But as long as the conflict continues between the two parties, the situation will continue to be explosive.

Egypt's problems with the Nile are likely to be equally long!

The Coptic Christians



Previous page: Saint Mark the Evangelist, Credit: [cardinalsblog.adw.org](http://cardinalsblog.adw.org)

The Copts are an ethno-religious group indigenous to North Africa who inhabited Egypt and Sudan two thousand years ago. Christianity came to Egypt via Saint Mark in Alexandria, during the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius around 42 AD. Most ethnic Copts are Coptic Orthodox Christians. They are the largest Christian denomination in Egypt, Sudan and Libya. Originally, the term 'Copts' covered all Egyptians who spoke the Coptic language, later, with the advent of Islam, the term became synonymous with Christians.



Proclaiming Claudius Emperor by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Credit: [thehistorianshut.com](http://thehistorianshut.com)

After the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 639 and 646 AD the treatment of the Coptic Christians ranged between tolerance and persecution. Persecution is critical to the Copts' sense of identity, like the Jews'. Most Copts adhere to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, an Oriental Orthodox Church. The smaller



Coptic Catholic Church is an Eastern Catholic Church, allied with the See of Rome; the rest belong to the Evangelical Church of Egypt.

Much about the Copts bewilders the world. Separated from the rest of Christendom following a fifth-century Church council that relegated them to the fringes of the faith, their separation was further entrenched after the Arab invasion in 641. For centuries, they lay outside of Western awareness, seldom mentioned, always forgotten. Successive caliphs and rulers took their shots at the community, undermining it further. The West was no better; when the Crusaders arrived at the region, they treated them as heretics and the missionaries viewed them as objects of conversion.



Pope Shenouda III, head of Egypt's Coptic Christian church, Credit: thestar.com

For 2,000 years, Copts clung to the land of their ancestors, refusing to abandon it. They had few options. In modern times, the gates of emigration opened to them, and they rushed through. Many Copts say they will not leave Egypt. The Lord who has protected His people through two millennia, will do so in future, they believe.

However, black humour reveals the bleak future of the Copts in an increasingly hostile Islamic Egypt: The Coptic Pope will still be called the Pope of Alexandria, except, he will be of Alexandria, Virginia and not Alexandria, Egypt!



Cairo has been Egypt's capital for a thousand years. Over this period, it acquired status as the most important educational, literary and cultural centre in the Arab world.



Cairo today, Credit: randrlife.co.uk

In March 2015, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi announced that the country will build a new capital from scratch, in the desert space between Cairo and the Suez Canal. The project, dubbed ‘the Capital Cairo,’ is expected to cost \$45 billion (Egypt’s GDP in 2021 \$403 billion).

The new capital of Egypt is yet to be named. In October 2021, transportation minister Kamel al-Wazir indicated the city might be named Egypt.

The new city is to be located 28 miles east of Cairo, halfway to the seaport city of Suez. According to the plans, the city will become the new administrative and financial capital of Egypt, housing the main government departments, ministries and foreign embassies. On 270 sq miles total area, it would have a population of about 7 million. It will be built as a smart city. It is planned to be completed by 2022, at a cost of USD 45 billion. However, a full cost and timescale for the overall project has not been announced and it is estimated that it is likely to cost \$58 billion. It is the most expensive project undertaken by President al-Sisi, dwarfing

the \$8 billion New Suez Canal. It accounts for 46 per cent of the total foreign debt, which reached \$125 billion (31% of GDP) as of the first quarter of 2020. It has been criticised as an attempt to move the centre of political and economic power away from the troublesome central Cairo district, with its propensity for protests and revolt.

The urban planning strategy seems to be to alter the landscape of Cairo, allowing for faster deployment of military and paramilitary forces. This effort involves large investment in transport infrastructure. The el-Sisi regime has embarked on the construction of 40 bridges, with a total budget of \$895 million.

There is an attempt here to reengineer social composition of slum areas, under the guise of development.

This grandiose project also needs to be viewed against the existential threat posed to Egypt's economy by the Ukraine war (85% of its wheat comes from Russia and Ukraine, as does 73% of its sunflower oil). Egypt's massive wheat imports are driven by the universal consumption of the round flatbread known as *eish baladi*. Egyptians consume 150-180 kilograms of bread per capita, more than double the global average of 70-80 kg.



Credit: mei.edu





Credit: dw.com



Credit:asianews.it

Keeping the price of Egypt's staple food affordable has been the bedrock of regime stability since the Free Officers revolution brought Nasser to power 60 years ago. When Sadat acceded to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund mandated subsidy cuts on wheat flour, cooking oil, and other staples, it



triggered Egypt's infamous 1977 'bread intifada.' At least 70 people were killed and over 550 injured in the protests, which only ceased with the deployment of the army and the re-institution of the subsidies. Mubarak, fared worse when Egypt's annual food inflation reached 19% in 2011; soaring bread prices toppled Mubarak ending his 30-year rule.

Egypt's wheat production in 2021-22 is expected at 9 million tonnes, while its consumption is estimated to be 21.3 million tonnes, leaving a shortfall of 12.3 million tonnes, to be made up with imports. Its foreign exchange reserves are enough for about four months' imports. To help out, Qatar has given \$5 billion aid, the UAE \$3 billion, and Saudi Arabia \$15 billion.

The Arabic word for bread, '*aiish*', is also the word for life.

El-Sisi will have to re-look at his ambitious Capital Cairo project, in view of the changed realities.

El-Sisi has appointed a Dubai-based real-estate investment fund called Capital City Partners (whose founder, Mohammed Al Abbar, built the Burj Khalifa skyscraper) to build the new capital. The UAE government has pledged \$4 billion to the project and a major part of the 'Capital Cairo' is expected to be named after a UAE leader.



Credit: enr.com





Credit: egypttoday.com



Credit: differentnow.tech

Lewis Mumford (1895–1990), the great American historian-philosopher examined the meaning of Kingship in ancient societies such as Egypt in his classic *The Myth*



of the Machine: Technics and Human Development (1967). He writes about the absolute power associated with Pharaohs in the ancient Egyptian civilization. The pharaoh, Mumford says, was thought of as a 'god in his own right.'

Mumford saw the Pharaoh as the living incarnation of his society. The community lived and flourished vicariously through him. By virtue of his divine status, the community attained a sense of coherence and unity. Mumford concludes that the Pharaoh alone had the power to create a 'colossal labour machine.' Thus, because of the institution of Pharaoh, Egyptian society was able to build giant pyramids. The Pharaoh gave commands, demanded absolute conformity and punished even trivial disobedience. He demonstrated how much communities, once collectively organized in great mechanical units, could accomplish.

Many of the Pyramids still stand, but the Pharaohs, in spite of their mummies on display to remind people of their divinity, are long dead. Who remembers their names? Who remembers that there were 359 Pharaohs of 31 major dynasties?

The Egyptian people in recent times, have lived under the regimes of the new, modern Pharaohs: Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hosni Mubarak and Abdel Fattah Saeed Hussein Khalil el-Sisi. Percy Bysshe Shelley had a word of advice for them.



Credit: in-nuce.com



I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said, "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Ozymandias, Percy Bysshe Shelley

Credit: [bookquotedecor.com](http://bookquotedecor.com)



Credit: [keveinbooksnreviews.in](http://keveinbooksnreviews.in)

Lebanon: Paris doesn't live here anymore

## Lebanon: Paris doesn't live here anymore

\*

*The Good God and the Evil God met on the mountain top.*

*The Good God said,*

*"Good day to you, brother."*

*The Evil God did not answer.*

*And the Good God said,*

*"You are in a bad humor today."*

*"Yes," said the Evil God.*

*"For of late, I have been often mistaken for you,*

*Called by your name, and treated as if I were you,*

*And it ill-pleases me."*

*And the Good God said,*

*"But I too have been mistaken for you and called by your name."*

*The Evil God walked away cursing the stupidity of man.*

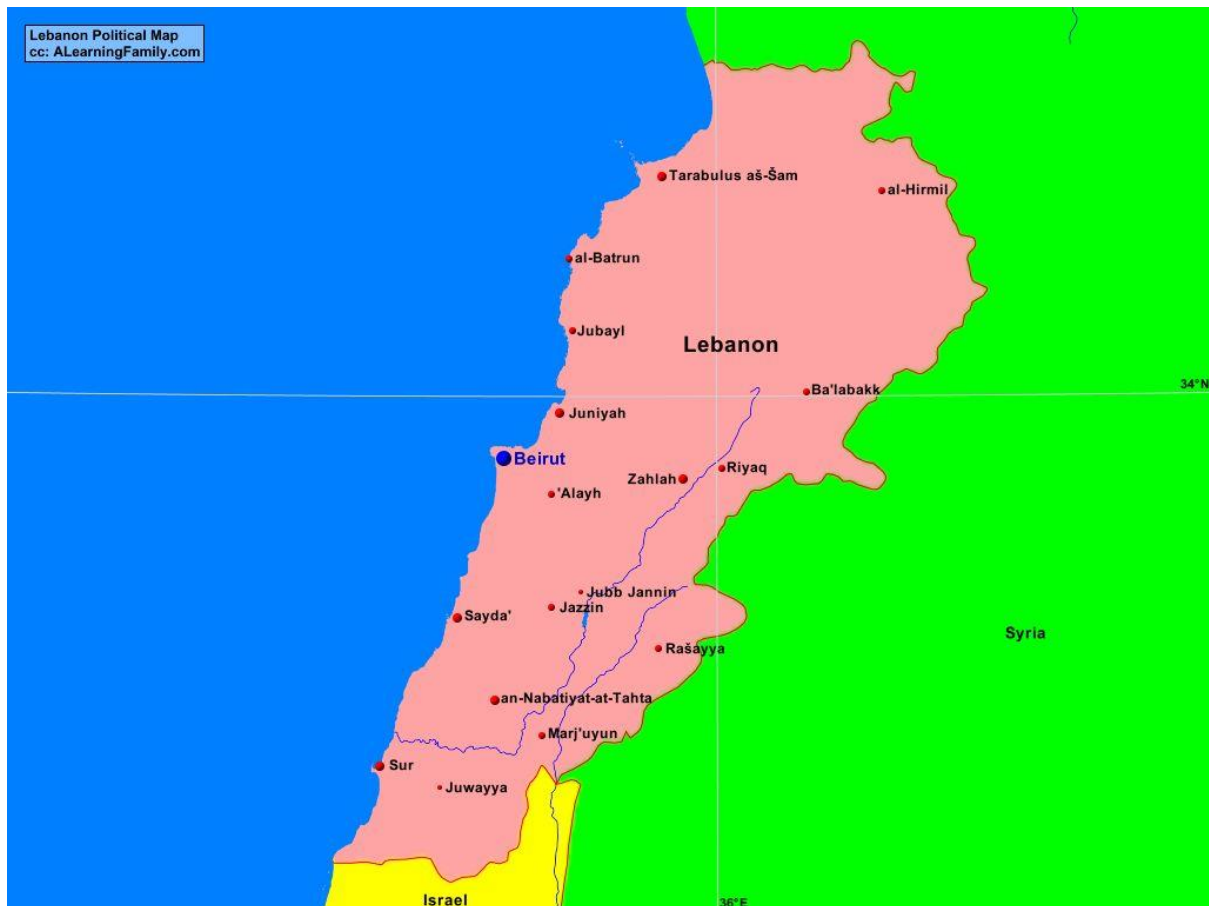
Kahlil Gibran

The Good God and the Evil God



Credit: thedailybeast.com



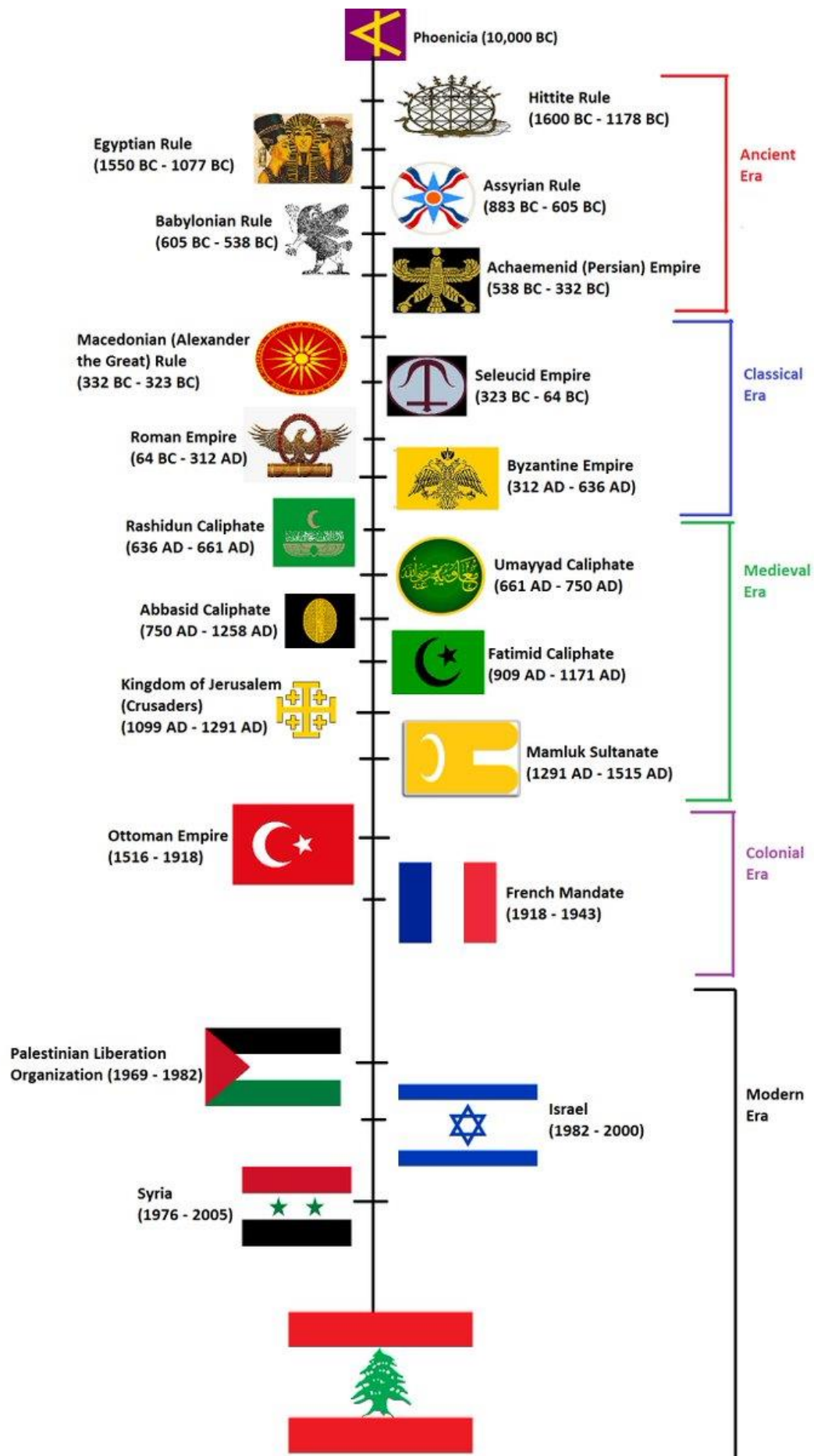


In 1960's, Lebanon was known as the '*Switzerland of the East*' and Beirut as the '*Paris of the Middle East*'.

Today, in the words of Henri Chaoul, former advisor to the Government of Lebanon, "*Lebanon is on a train to hell and is about to reach the last station soon.*"



Henri Chaoul Credit: alarabiya.net



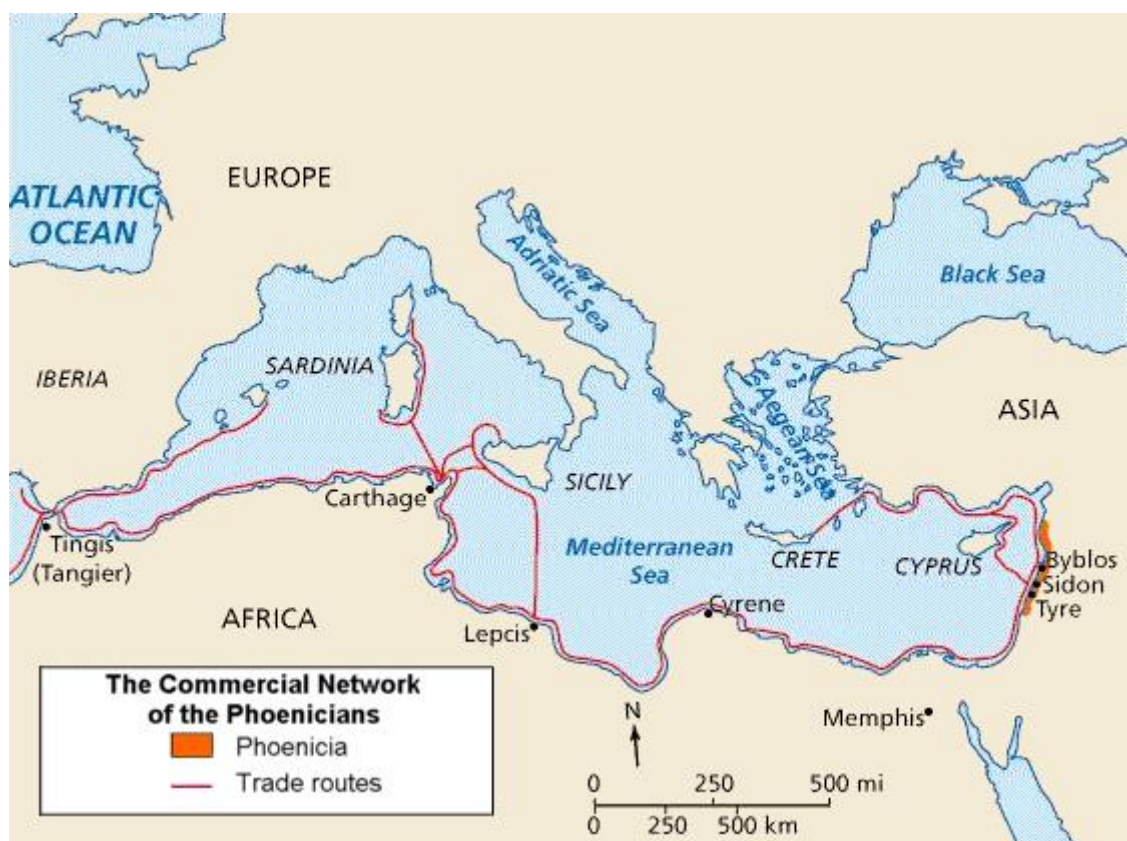
## Empires in Lebanon

Empire	Period
Canaan-Phoenicia	2500-0333 BC
Hittite	1600-1178 BC
Egyptian	1150-1077 BC
Assyrian	883-605 BC
Babylonian	605-538 BC
Persian	538 BC-332 CE
Greek	332-64 CE
Roman	64 BC – 646 CE
Rashidun	636-661
Umayyad	661-750
Abbasid	750-1258
Jerusalem	1099-1291
Mamluk	1291-1515
Ottoman	1516-1918



## The Ancient Era

Phoenicia was an ancient maritime civilization originating in the Levant region of the eastern Mediterranean, primarily located in modern Lebanon. 'Levant' is a geographical term that refers to Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and parts of Turkey; in its broad sense, it also includes Egypt, Greece, Iraq and Libya. The term entered English language in the 15th century from French-Italian; *Levante* meaning 'rising', as in 'rising of the Sun'.



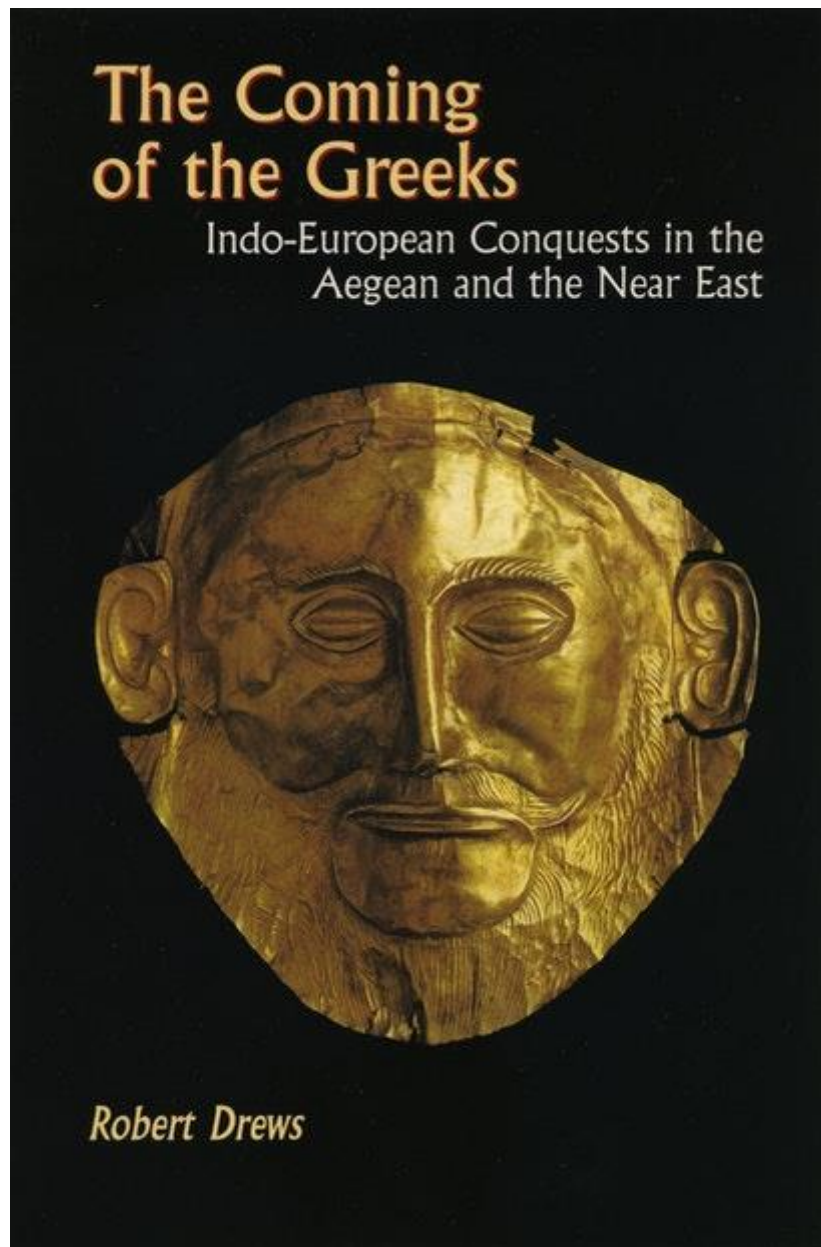
Map of Phoenicia and its Mediterranean trade routes

The Phoenicians were a Semitic-speaking people of somewhat unknown origin who emerged in the Levant around 3000 BC. The main Semitic languages are: Arabic, Amharic, Hebrew and Aramaic.

The term Phoenicia is an ancient Greek name that described one of their famous exports, a dye also known as Tyrian purple. Professor Robert Drews of Vanderbilt University believes the term 'Canaanites' (people living in the area known as Canaan), corresponds to the ethnic group 'Phoenicians'.

The Phoenicians came to prominence in the mid-12th century BC, and they were renowned as skilled traders and mariners, becoming the dominant commercial

power for much of classical antiquity. They developed an expansive maritime trade network that lasted over a millennium, helping facilitate the exchange of cultures, ideas, and knowledge between major civilizations such as Greece, Egypt, and Mesopotamia.



Credit: [press.princeton.edu](http://press.princeton.edu)

The Phoenicians were organized in city-states, similar to those of ancient Greece, of which the most notable were Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos. Each city-state was politically independent, but they did not consider themselves as one people.

In absence of written records, they were long considered a lost civilization and only around the mid-20th century the historians have realized what a developed civilization it was. Their legacy is the world's oldest verified alphabet, which was used to develop the Greek alphabet and the Latin script. They are also credited with innovations in shipbuilding, navigation, industry, agriculture, and government. Their international trade network is believed to have fostered the economic, political, and cultural foundations of Classical Western civilization.



The Abduction of Europa, 1716, oil on canvas, by Jean François de Troy.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Credit: thedelphiguide.com

According to the Greek legend, Cadmus, Prince of Tyre, brought the alphabet with him to Greece in his search for his abducted sister Europa. Cadmus is thought to have settled in Greece and founds the city of Thebes. According to Herodotus, the father of history, the Greeks originally shaped their letters just like the Phoenicians and in course of time, changed them.



After their gradual decline, the Phoenician city-states on the Lebanese coast were conquered in 539 BC by Persia under Cyrus the Great (559–529 BC). Under Darius the Great (521–486 BC), the area comprising Phoenicia, Palestine, Syria, and Cyprus was administered in a single satrapy.

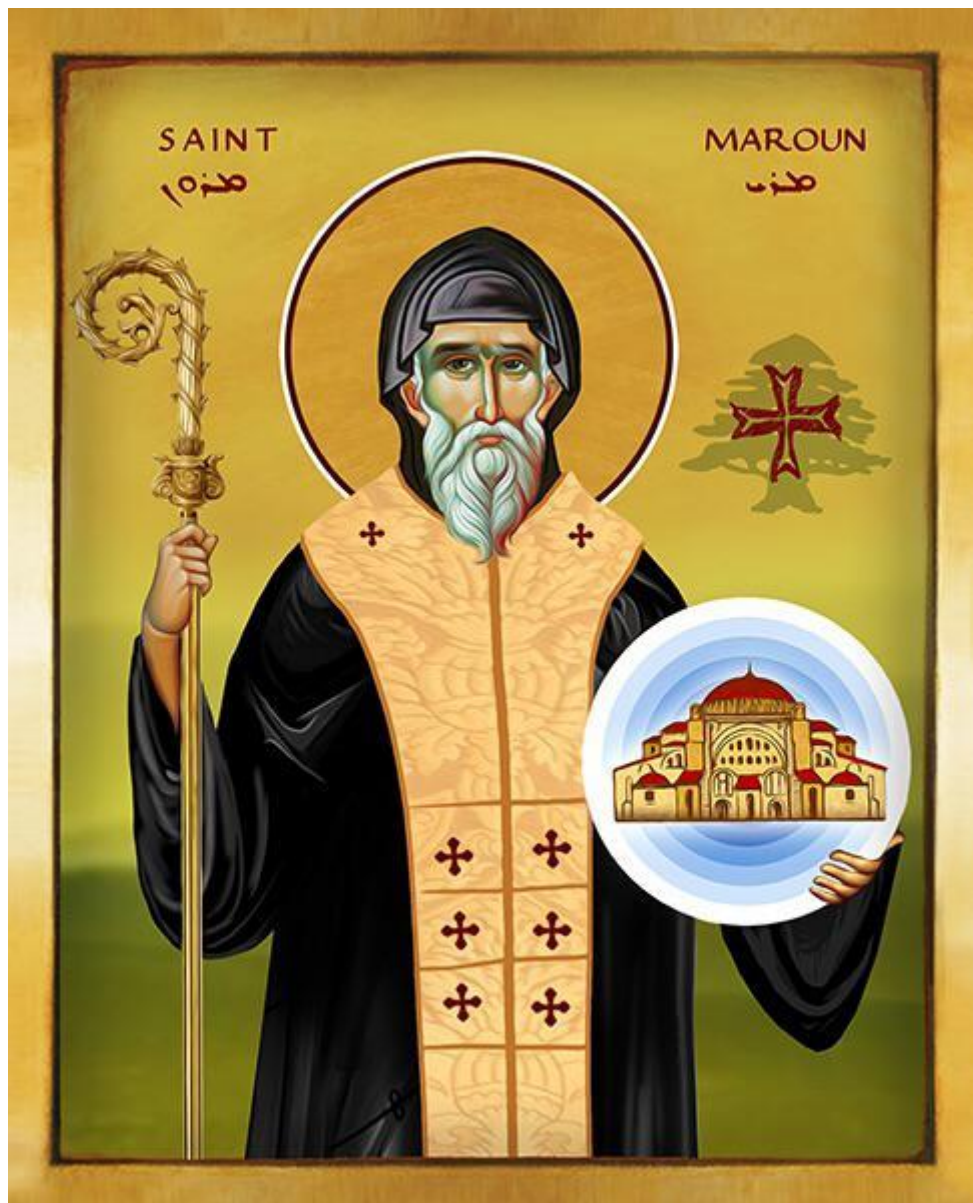
After two centuries of Persian rule, the Macedonian ruler Alexander the Great, during his war against Persia, attacked and burned Tyre, the most prominent Phoenician city. He conquered the area known now as Lebanon and other nearby regions in 332 BC.



The Siege of by Alexander the Great, Credit: warfarehistorynetwork.com



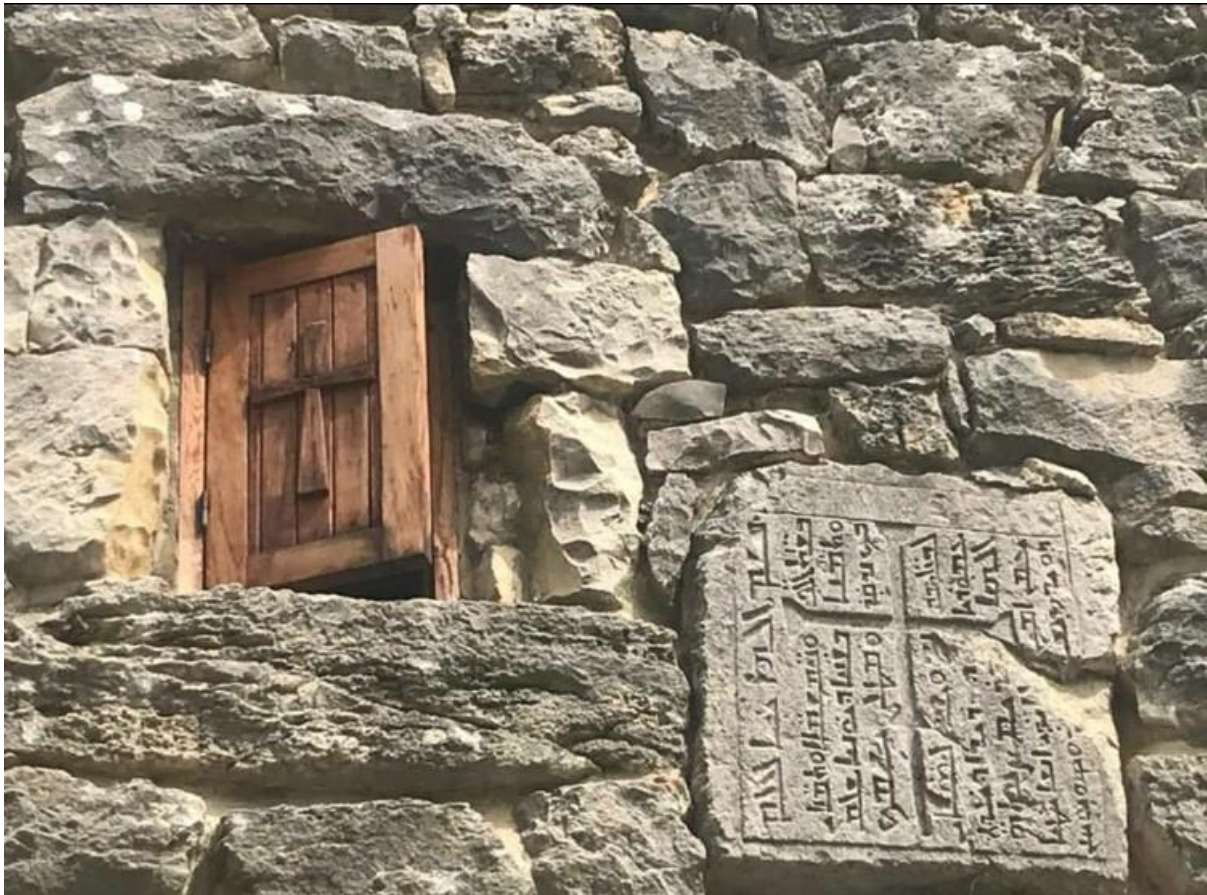
Christianity was introduced to Lebanon from neighboring Galilee, in the 1st century. The region, as with the rest of Syria and much of Anatolia (Greek 'east'), became a major center of Christianity. In the 4th century it was incorporated into the Christian Byzantine Empire. Mount Lebanon and its coastal plain became part of the Diocese of the East.



St. Maron, Credit: reddit.com



During the late 4th and early 5th centuries, a hermit named Maron ('maron' or 'marun' in Syriac means 'small lord'), established a monastic tradition, focused on the importance of monotheism and asceticism, near the mountain range of Mount Lebanon. The monks who followed Maron spread his teachings among the native Lebanese Christians and pagans in the mountains and the coast of Lebanon. These Lebanese Christians came to be known as Maronites, and moved into the mountains to avoid religious persecution by Roman authorities.



Credit: medium.com

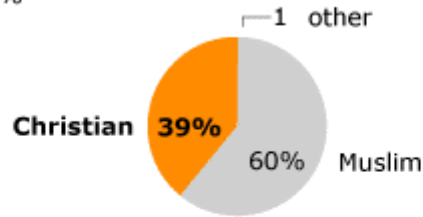
The name 'Lebanon' occurs more than 70 times in the Hebrew Bible, Tanakh. Christians in the region viewed Lebanon as the place for refuge when subjected to harsh Roman rule. Today, in Lebanon, there are twelve versions of Christianity: Maronite Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Melkite Catholic, Protestant, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Latin Catholic, Assyrian, Syriac Catholic, Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean Catholic and Coptic Orthodox.

Lebanon was a Christian nation until the 17th century.



### Christians in Lebanon

in %



#### Catholics

Maronite, Melkite, Syrian, Armenian, Roman

#### Orthodox

Greek, Armenian, Syrian

#### rest

Chaldean, Assyrian, Copt, Protestant

Credit: fanack.com

The French considered the Maronites as the 'Eastern Catholics' and respected their church as the 'eldest daughter of the Church', and considered it their sacred duty to protect the Maronite church!

France therefore, intervened in 1860 to protect the Christians when the Civil War broke out between the Maronites and the Druze. On his first visit to France in 1980, Pope John Paul II queried his audience: *"France, fille aînée de l'Église, es-tu fidèle aux promesses de ton baptême?"* ("France, the eldest daughter of the Church, are you faithful to your baptismal promises?")



## The Middle Ages

During the 7th century A D the Muslim Arabs conquered Syria soon after the death of Muhammad, establishing a new regime to replace the Romans/the Byzantines. Though Islam and the Arabic language were officially dominant under this new regime, the general populace was not keen to convert from Christianity and change from the Syriac language. In particular, the Maronite community clung to its faith and managed to maintain a large degree of autonomy despite the efforts of the successive of Muslim rulers of Syria. Muslim influence increased greatly in the seventh century, when the Umayyad capital was established in Damascus. The Umayyad Caliphate 661–750 A D was the second caliphate after the death of Muhammad. The caliphate was ruled by the Umayyad dynasty based in Syria. At its height, the Umayyad Caliphate covered area of 4.3 million sq miles, making it one of the largest empires in history.



The expansion of the Muslim Caliphate 632-750, Credit: Wikipedia.org





Dome of the Rock, and Damascus Mosque, Credit: Wikipedia.org



The Umayyad architecture is on display in the Dome of the Rock, and Damascus Mosque.

During the 11th century the Druze faith emerged from a branch of Islam. The Druze are an Arabic-speaking, ethno-religious group which originated in West Asia.



Credit: reddit.com

The Druze, refer to themselves as al-Muwahhhideen, or 'believers in one God' are concentrated in the rural, mountainous areas east and south of Beirut. Lebanon has the world's second largest Druze population, after Syria. The Druze faith does not follow the Five Pillars of Islam, such as fasting during the month of Ramadan, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Druze faith incorporates several elements of Ismailism, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism etc. When the Druze live among people of other religions, they try to blend in, in order to protect their religion and for their safety. The faith allows them to pray as Muslims or as Christians, depending on

where they are. This system is apparently changing in modern times, where greater security has allowed the Druze to be more open about their religious identity.

Amal Clooney (Mrs. George Clooney) is one of the more prominent Druze personalities; she has Druze father and Sunni mother.



Credit: time.com



Credit: thecut.com

The relationship between the Druze and Christians in Lebanon has been characterized by harmony and coexistence, almost throughout history, with the exception of some periods, especially, the 1860 Mount Lebanon civil war. The relationship between the Druze and Muslims has been characterized by hostility and persecution. The Druze faith is often classified as a branch of the Isma'ilism, a sub-sect of Shia Islam. Most Druze however, do not identify themselves as Muslim and do not accept the five pillars of Islam. The persecution of the Druze included demolition of prayer houses, other holy places and forced conversion to Islam.

The Druze community in Lebanon has played an important role in the formation of the modern state of Lebanon, despite being a minority. Before and during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90), the Druze were in favor of Pan-Arabism including, the PLO. Many fought alongside the leftist and Palestinian parties against the Lebanese Front of the Christian groups. After the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt on 16 March 1977, his son Walid Jumblatt took over leadership of the party to preserve the identity of the community.



al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, Credit: iis.ac.uk

Al-Ḥākīm bi-Amr Allāh ( 'The Ruler by the Order of God'), was the 6<sup>th</sup> Fatimid Caliph and 16<sup>th</sup> Ismaili imam (996–1021). Al-Hakim is an important figure for the Shia Ismaili sects as well as to the Druze of the Levant.

Historian Paul Walker has called him, *'mad and despotic tyrant, irrationally given to killing those around him on a whim, driven by the conviction that being divinely ordained, his every action was just and righteous.'* He was vilified by his critics as the 'mad Caliph' and the 'Nero of Islam.'





On 18 October 1009, Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered the complete destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (also called the Church of the Resurrection) as part of a general campaign against Christian places of worship in Palestine and Egypt. The damage was extensive, with few parts of the early church remaining, and the roof of the rock-cut tomb damaged; the original shrine was destroyed. Adhemar of Chabannes recorded that the church of St George at Lydda *‘with many other churches of the saints’* had been attacked, and the *‘basilica of the Lord’s Sepulchre destroyed down to the ground’*”.



al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, Credit: the patriots.asia



Adémar de Chabannes, Credit: Wikipedia.org





Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Credit: fineartofamerica.com





Previous page, Church of the Holy Sepulchre by David Roberts, Credit: Wikipedia.org



Original Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Credit: churchoftheholyssepulchre.net



Renovated Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Credit: churchoftheholyssepulchre.net





Previous page, Pope Urban II calls Christians to First Crusade on 18 November 1095

Credit: heralddemocrat.com

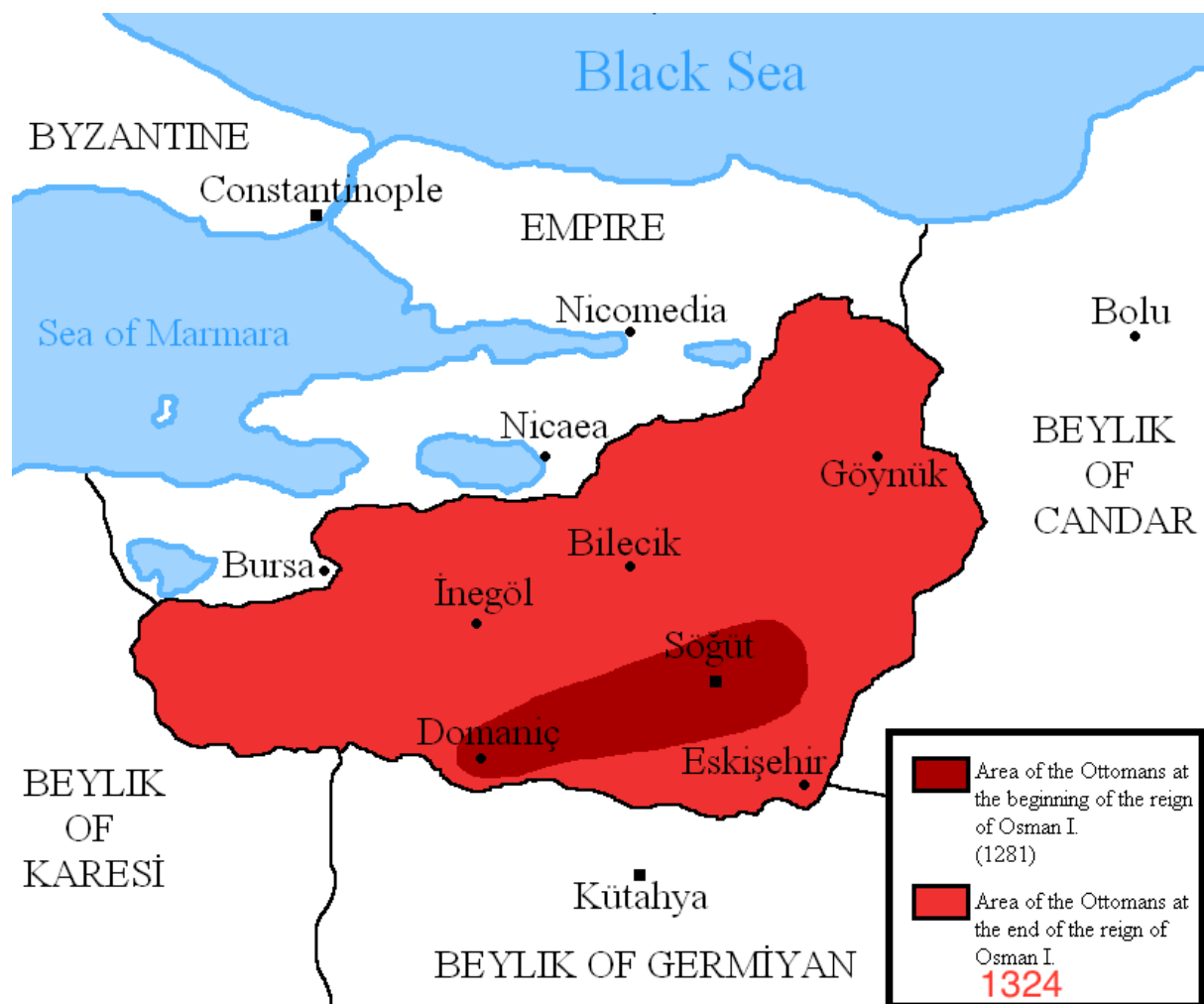
European reaction was of utter shock and anger, with far-reaching consequences. The occupation of the Christian holy places in Palestine and the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher by Caliph Al Hakim led to nine military campaigns, known as the Crusades, undertaken by Christians of western Europe to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims. The first Crusade was proclaimed by Pope Urban II in 1095 at the Council of Clermont-Ferrand in France. After taking Jerusalem, the Crusaders turned their attention to the Lebanese coast. Tripoli capitulated in 1109; Beirut and Sidon, in 1110. Tyre stubbornly resisted but finally capitulated in 1124 after a long siege.



Europe on the eve of the First Crusade (1092)

Although they failed to establish a permanent presence, the Crusaders left their imprint on Lebanon. Among the conspicuous results of the Crusades, which ended with the fall of Acre in 1291, are the remains of many towers along the coast, ruins of castles on hills and mountain slopes, and numerous churches.

Of all the contacts established by the Crusaders with the peoples of the Middle East, those with the Maronites of Lebanon were among the most enduring. They acquainted the Maronites with European influences and made them more receptive to friendly approaches from Westerners. During this period, the Maronites were brought into a union with the Holy See, a union that survived till the late 1980s. France was a major participant in the Crusades and the French saw them as Roman Catholic brethren. These initial contacts led to centuries of support for the Maronites from France and Italy, even after the fall of the Crusader states in the region.



Credit: Wikipedia.org







Osman I or Osman Ghazi, sometimes called Othman, was the founder of the Ottoman dynasty. The dynasty bearing his name later established and ruled the Ottoman Empire. This state, while initially a small Turkmen principality during Osman's lifetime, transformed into a world empire in the centuries after his death till the end of World War I.

Bitter conflicts among the various regional and ethnic groups in Lebanon and Syria characterized the thirteenth century. The Crusaders, who came from Europe, the Mongols, who came from the steppes of Central Asia, and the Mamluks, who came from Egypt, all sought to be masters in the area. In this hard and confused struggle for supremacy, victory came to the Mamluks.

The word 'Ottoman' has Italian-French root (*'Ottomano'*), but its origin is Arabic, from 'Uthman', or 'Othman'. In 1301, Uthman overthrew the Seljuk aristocracy and proclaimed himself the Sultan of Asia Minor. The Ottoman Empire replaced the Byzantine Empire; it reached its zenith under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66); its borders included Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Hungary, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, parts of Arabia and much of the coastal strip of North Africa.

To defend the growing empire, the Ottoman Sultans in the late 14th century created by the Ottoman Sultans in the late 14th century Order of the Janissaries, an infantry formation of slaves and Christian converts. Initially, they were employed as household security guards, but soon achieved elite status through the *devşirme* ('child levy' or 'blood tax') system of child slavery, by which young Christian boys, notably Armenians, Albanians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Croats, Greeks, Macedonians and Serbs, were taken from the Balkans, adopted and introduced to Islam, and incorporated into the Ottoman army. Soon, they were recognized as among the best-trained and most effective military units in Europe. They were paid well, on time and were expected to be ready for battle at any time.

However, by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century corruption and indiscipline set in and the Janissary corps ceased to function as an elite military force. As the western europe modernized its military organization with new technology, the Janissaries lost their superiority as they resisted change. When the Janissaries felt their privileges would be threatened, or that they might be superseded by the cavalrymen, they rose in rebellion. By the time the Janissaries were suppressed, it was too late for Ottoman military power to catch up with the West. The number of Janissaries had grown from 20,000 in 1575 to 135,000 in 1826 and many were collecting moneys from the empire, without performing military duties. The corps was therefore abolished by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826 in the 'Auspicious Incident', in which 6,000 or more Janissaries were executed.



Janissaries: The forced servitude of Christian slaves, Credit: medium.com





Previous page Agha (Commander) of the Janissaries in 1768, Credit: Wikipedia.org

The Ottoman Sultan, Selim I (1516–20), also known as Selim the Grim or Selim the Resolute, invaded Syria-Lebanon in 1516. As a result, the emirs of Lebanon (the Druze Maans and the Chehabs, who were Sunni converts to Maronite Christianity) linked their fate to the Ottomans. Selim I granted them semi-autonomous status and the Ottomans, with their help ruled Lebanon till the middle of the nineteenth century.



Sultan Selim I, Credit: Wikimedia.org





Fakhr ad-Din I, Credit: [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fakhr_ad-Din_I.jpg)

Next page, Fakhreddin II, Credit: [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fakhreddin_II.jpg)





The Maans were Qahtani Arabs who settled in the Lebanon Mountains and adopted the Druze religion. Their rise to power started with Fakhr ad-Din I, who was permitted by the Ottoman rulers to organize his own army and reached great heights during the reign of Fakhreddin II (1570–1635).

The Shihabs, or Chehabs traced their lineage to the ancient Quraysh tribe from Mecca. The Chehabs shared ancestry with the Maans through the female lineage. However, unlike the Maans who became Druze in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Chehabs converted to Christianity at the end of the 18th century. The Chehabs worked methodically to encourage Christian migration into Lebanon to strengthen the family's position. Thus, they introduced French culture into the region.

The most prominent among the Shihabs was Prince Bashir Chehab II, who ruled for fifty years (1789-1840). He overturned the traditional system of governance in Mount Lebanon by eliminating the feudal authority of both the Druze as well as Maronite *muqata'jis*, the secular Maronite leadership, in the process injecting sectarianism in Mount Lebanon's politics. He used Maronite fighters to quell Druze risings, and later used Druze fighters against Maronites. Historian William Harris concludes that Bashir contributed to the creation of the troubled modern state of Lebanon, through his short-sighted policies.



Prince Bashir Chehab II, Credit: Wikipedia.org



On 3 September 1840, the Ottoman Sultan appointed Bashir III the Emir of Mount Lebanon, which had a Christian majority. Bashir was an incompetent ruler whose main activity was breeding pigeons. Having a urological condition, he had a toilet built for himself over the roof, so that he could indulge in his hobby without much interruption. This gave birth to a sarcastic poem, which translated reads: *'What was the accomplishment of Prince Bashir? He built a pigeon tower with a toilet'*. The Sultan deposed him on 13 January 1842 and appointed Omar Pasha as Governor.



Bashir Chehab III, Credit: prebook.com

Omer Pasha, also known as Omer Pasha Latas was an Ottoman Field Marshal. Born in Austrian territory to Serbian Orthodox Christian parents, he initially served as an Austrian soldier. Later, when faced with charges of embezzlement, he fled to Ottoman Bosnia and converted to Islam. A strategic military thinker, Omer Pasha took bold decisions and relentlessly followed them through. He had a well-deserved reputation as a ruthless disciplinarian.



Omer Pasha, Credit: Wikipedia.org

The Druze and the Maronite Christians had lived in peace and harmony, with amicable relations for most of the history, with exceptions like the 1860 Mount Lebanon conflict. Both fought for dominance in Mount Lebanon, with the French supporting the Maronites and the British supporting the Druze, delighting the Ottoman Governor.

The civil conflict of 1860 in Mount Lebanon started on 27th May 1860 and ended sometime in October 1860; it is estimated that between 10000 and 20000 people were killed.

James Lewis Farley, an Irish banker and writer published in 1858, a work on 'The Massacres in Syria' (which used to be hyphenated with Lebanon during the Ottoman period), warmly defending the cause of the Christians. He wrote in 1861 an account of 'The Druses and the Maronites.' In his letter published in the English Daily News in July 1860, he gave the following count of destruction: 326 villages, 560 churches, 28 schools and seminaries, 42 convents, and 9 religious establishments.



Algerian Emir Abdelkader El Djezairi rescuing Christians from death, Credit: emir-stein.org

The Maronites were on the verge of defeat when the Concert of Europe (a general consensus among the Great Powers of 19th-century Europe to maintain balance of power and the integrity of territorial boundaries) intervened and established a commission to determine the outcome. The French forces in place, were used to enforce the final decision. The French accepted the Druze as having established



control and the Maronites were reduced to a semi-autonomous region around Mount Lebanon, without direct control over Beirut. The entire area was placed under direct rule of the governor of Damascus, to be overseen by the Ottoman Empire.



French expeditionary corps led by General Beaufort d'Hautpoul, in Beirut on 16 August 1860,

Credit: [wikipediacommons.com](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Beaufort_d'Hautpoul_in_Beirut_1860.jpg)

In the second half of the 19th century, European Empires expanded frenetically; so, did Beirut. France strengthened its position as the 'protector' of Arab Christians and the Maronites were at the center of this enterprise.

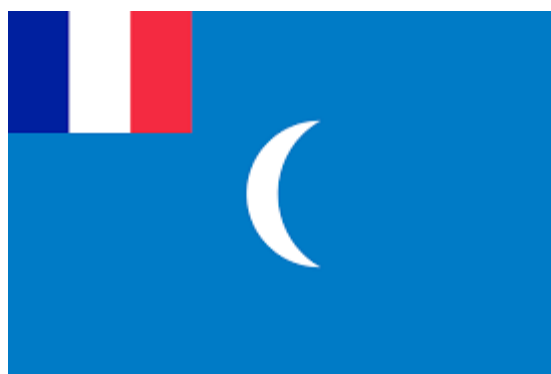
The League of Nations gave the mandate to France for Syria and Lebanon in the aftermath of the First World War and the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. The mandate system was supposed to differ from colonization, with the governing country intended to act as a trustee until the inhabitants were considered eligible for self-government. The mandate would then terminate and an independent state would be born.

In 1923 the League of Nations formally gave the class 'A' mandate for Lebanon and Syria to France. The Maronites, strongly pro-French, welcomed this and during the next 20 years of the mandate, the Maronites received favorable treatment. The expansion of pre-war Lebanon into Greater Lebanon, however, changed the balance of the population. The Maronites were the largest single segment of the population, but without majority.





Map showing the states of the French Mandate from 1921 to 1922



Flag of the French mandate Credit: en-academic.com

The Lebanese population was more or less equally divided between Christians and Muslims and a large section of Muslims did not want to be ruled by France and wanted to be part of a larger Syrian/Arab state. To ease the growing tensions among the communities, the constitution of 1926 provided that each should be

equitably represented in public offices. Thus, by convention the president of the republic would normally be a Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the chamber a Shi'i Muslim.

The mandate placed on France the responsibility of creating and controlling a system of administration, of developing the resources of the country, and of preparing it for self-government. The French mandatory administration carried out much constructive work: Roads were built, town planning was started and urban amenities were improved, land reforms were initiated and measures to improve agriculture were introduced.



Seal of the states under French mandate, Credit: thereaderwiki.com



Stamps used during the French Mandate, Credit: bigblue1840-1940.blogspot.com

# **FRENCH MANDATE**

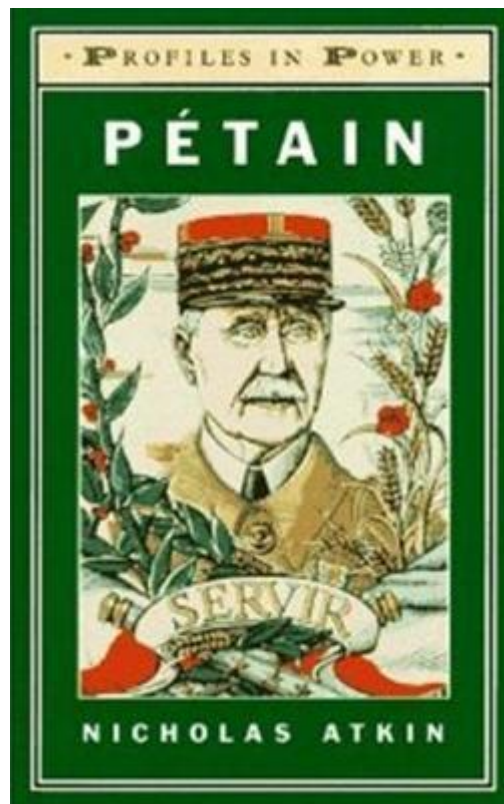
**SYRIA AND LEBANON**



**1923-1946**



The Lebanese declared unilateral independence on November 22, 1943, ending the French Mandate which lasted for 23 years.



Credit: goodreads.com



General Henri Fernand Dentz, Credit: Wikipedia.org

When the Vichy government of Marshal Philippe Pétain assumed power over French territory in 1940, General Henri Fernand Dentz was appointed as High

Commissioner of Lebanon. This led to the resignation of Lebanese president Emile Edde on April 4, 1941. After 5 days, Dentz appointed Alfred Naccache as President, whose tenure ended after 3 months with the surrender of the Vichy forces in Lebanon and Syria to the Free French and British troops.

The Armistice of Saint Jean d'Acre (also known as the Convention of Acre) concluded the Syria-Lebanon Campaign of World War II. The Armistice, signed on 14 July 1941, was between the Allied forces in the Middle East under the command of British General Henry Maitland Wilson, and Vichy France forces in Syria and Lebanon, under the command of General Henri Dentz, the High Commissioner of the Levant.



Charles De Gaulle in Beirut, Credit: reddit.com

During General Charles de Gaulle's visit to Lebanon, the Lebanese leaders asked him to end the French Mandate and recognize Lebanon's independence. Although General Georges Albert Julien Catroux declared Lebanese independence on November 26, 1941, the French were unwilling to relax control. The August 1943 elections resulted in victory for the Nationalists and their leader, Bishara al-Khuri, was elected President. The new government passed legislation that eliminated all French influence, to which the French objected. On 11 November 1943, the

President and almost the entire government were arrested by the French. This led to an insurrection, followed by British diplomatic intervention. The French restored the government and transferred powers to it.



Independence Day celebrations 22 November 1943, Credit: lebaneseexaminer.com

On 22 March 1945, Lebanon became a member of the Arab League and a member in the United Nations in 1945. On December 31, 1946, French troops withdrew completely from Lebanon in December 1946, with the signing of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty.



Credit: alamy.com



In 1932, the Lebanese Government under the French mandate conducted a census that ultimately determined political representation within the Lebanese government after acquiring independence through the National Pact. The census served not only to establish the proportion of different religions within Lebanon, but also to ultimately determine the ratios within the government. Because the results of the census demonstrated a Maronite Christian majority of 51%, the National Pact then set in place the requirements of a Maronite Christian always holding the presidency and the parliament having a 6:5 ratio in favor of Christians as well.

Lebanon Demographics (%)

Year	Muslim	Christian
1932	42	51
1985	75	25
2010	54	41
2017	48	46

Controversy arose in response to the census. The critics felt that the census did not precisely define a Lebanese citizen and worked off a definition created and used by the Ottoman Empire defining it as ‘having been present in Lebanon during August 1924’, the last time when it would have been recorded. Because of this, it was argued that the census was biased and that it was created with the intention of maintaining Lebanon as a Christian nation and to maintain the power of the Christian elites.

This became increasingly important as the 1932 Lebanese census became the basis for the creation of all of the ratios defined within the National Pact, perpetuating power of the Maronite Christians in the governance of Lebanon. Because Maronite Christians were closely aligned with the French government and their interests in

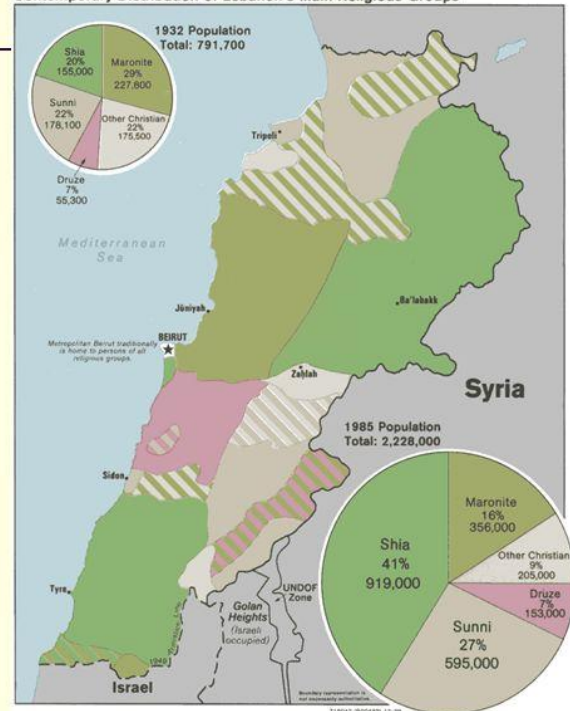
Lebanon, many feared that their subsequent power and the assurance of independence was done with an eye on protecting the French interests.

## Consociational Democracy

### ■ 1943 National Pact:

- **President: Maronite**
- **Prime minister: Sunni**
- **Assembly Speaker: Shi'a**
- Unicameral Assembly of Representatives
  - elections every 4 years
  - seats allocated according to 1932 census (6:5 Christian)

Contemporary Distribution of Lebanon's Main Religious Groups



[http://www.thefullwiki.org/Lebanon#cite\\_note-free-dom-107](http://www.thefullwiki.org/Lebanon#cite_note-free-dom-107)

<http://almashriq.hi.fo.no/lebanon/300/340/342/govern.html>

Credit: slideplayer.com



Previous page, Credit: ebay.com



Credit: libanpost.com

The National Pact of 1943, was an unwritten gentlemen's agreement between President Bishara al-Khuri (Maronite Christian) and Prime Minister Riad Al Solh (Sunni Muslim) to protect the interests of the political elites.

Key points of the agreement were:

- Maronite Christians will not seek Western intervention and accept that Lebanon had Arab features
- Muslims shall abandon their aspiration to unite with Syria
- The President of the Republic and the Commander of the Armed Forces will always be Maronite Christian
- The Prime Minister of the Republic will always be a Sunni Muslim
- The Speaker of the Parliament will always be a Shia Muslim
- The Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and the Deputy Prime Minister will always be Greek Orthodox Christian
- The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces will always be a Druze
- There will always be a ratio of 6:5 between Christians and Muslims (including Druze) in the Parliament.





Flag of Greater Lebanon during the French mandate (1920–1943)



Flag as drawn and approved by the members of the Lebanese parliament in 1943,

Credit: Wikipedia.org

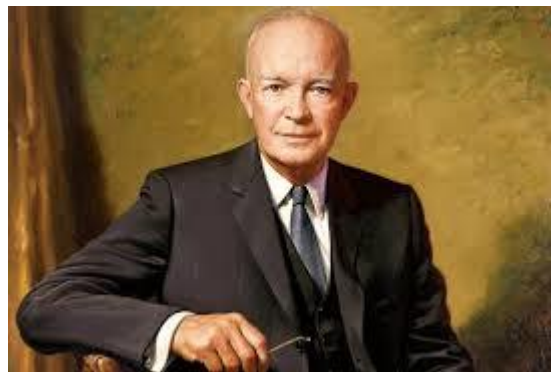


The National Pact also attempted to advance the idea of the distinctiveness of the Lebanese people by adopting a 'neither Arab, nor Western' concept stressing that Lebanon would neither seek unity with the Arab world nor special relations with the West.

In May 1948, however, Lebanon supported Arab countries in their war against Israel. As a result, 100,000 Palestinians came to Lebanon as refugees. Even after the armistice in 1949, Israel refused to let them return.

After the Suez Crisis of 1956, there was great increase in Arab hostility to the U.S. and overwhelming support to the Soviet Union in Egypt and Syria. President Gamal Abdel Nasser became the idol of the Arab masses, especially of the poor and the youth and the U.S. feared that the region would come under the influence of Communism.

The Eisenhower Doctrine was announced in January 1957. It pledged American economic and military aid to the nations of the Middle East considered vulnerable to Communism. The U. S. Congress passed the doctrine on 7 March 1957.



US President Eisenhower, Credit: youtube.com



Camille Chamoun, Credit: middleeast.in-24.com

Camille Chamoun was elected the second President of Lebanon in 1952 for a six-year term, aided by the U. S. government's \$12.7 million aid and help from the CIA in distributing 'campaign contributions' to the pro-U. S. politicians. Fifty-three out of the sixty-six parliamentarians supported Chamoun!

On 1 February 1958, Egypt and Syria formed the United Arab Republic (U.A.R.). Emboldened, Nasser began to issue calls for Arab unity creating panic among the neighbors. The Lebanese government complained to the UN Security Council on 22 May 1958, accusing the U.A.R. of 'interference' in its affairs.

President Eisenhower authorized the 'Operation Blue Bat' on 15 July 1958. The goal of the operation was to strengthen the Chamoun government to confidently face internal opposition as well as threats from Syria and Egypt.



Operation Blue Bat, Credit: digitalcombatsimulator.com

The plan was to occupy and secure Beirut International Airport and the seaport along with the main approaches to the city. The operation involved more than 14,000 troops, supported by a fleet of 70 ships with 40,000 sailors.

Eisenhower sent Robert Murphy (who later advised Nixon, Kennedy, Johnson and Ford, as well) to Lebanon as his representative. Murphy convinced both sides to reach a compromise by electing the moderate Christian General Fouad Chehab as President on the completion of Chamoun's Term on 22 September 1958. The U.S. forces were withdrawn on 25 October 1958.





Robert Murphy, Credit: Wikipedia.org



General Fouad Chehab, Credit: Wikipedia.org

The Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) had its origin in the conflicts of the post-Ottoman period, exacerbated by alarming demographic trends, inter-faith strife and the tensions among Syria, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Israel.

It is estimated that during the 16-year War, more than 100,000 people died and another 100,000 suffered serious injuries; almost a million people were displaced.

The Civil War can be divided into six phases:

- Initial outbreak mid-1970's
- Syrian and Israeli intervention in late 1970's
- Escalation of the PLO-Israeli conflict early 1980's
- 1982 Israeli invasion
- Multinational involvement and
- Formalization of Syrian occupation.

The 1978 South Lebanon conflict was invasion of Lebanon by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in response to the Coastal Road massacre of 15 March 1978, in which 38 Israelis, including 13 children, were killed and 71 wounded. The UN Security Council on 19th March 1978 called for immediate Israeli withdrawal and deployed the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to maintain peace. Israeli forces withdrew later in 1978, leaving its ally, the Lebanese Christian South Lebanon Army (SLA) to control the border.



Coastal Road massacre, Credit: [historica.fandom.com](https://historica.fandom.com)

The 1982 Lebanon War began on 6 June 1982, when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) invaded Southern Lebanon, to put an end to the repeated attacks by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). After defeating the PLO (and the Syrian, and Lebanese Muslim forces supporting it), the Israeli forces, along with their Maronite allies occupied Southern Lebanon, surrounding the PLO and the Syrian Army. In June 1982, under the peace agreement negotiated by the U. S. Envoy Philip Habib, the PLO relocated its headquarters to Tripoli, north of Beirut.



Philip Habib, Credit: [diplomacy.state.gov](https://diplomacy.state.gov)

Combat returned to Beirut in 1987, with the Palestinians, Leftists and Druze fighters allied against Amal, the Lebanese Shia political party. After winning the battle, the Druze-backed Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) controlled West Beirut. The Syrians then entered Beirut and violence broke out again in 1988 between Amal and Hezbollah.



President Amine Gemayel, Credit: [historica.fandom.com](https://historica.fandom.com)



President Gemayel's term expired in September 1988. Before stepping down, he appointed Armed Forces Commander General Michel Aoun (also, Maronite Christian), as acting Prime Minister. This action, was rejected by the Muslim groups who pledged support to Selim al-Hoss, a Sunni who had succeeded Rashid Karami. In 1989 two rival governments were formed in Lebanon: a military one under General Michel Aoun in East Beirut and a civilian one under Selim el-Hoss based in West Beirut, supported by the Syrians.



President Michel Aoun, Credit: timesofisrael.com



Selim el-Hoss, Credit: fanoos.com

The Taif Agreement, negotiated in Taif, Saudi Arabia, (officially known as the National Reconciliation Accord), was reached to provide *'the basis to end the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon'*. It was signed on 22 October 1989 and ratified by the Lebanese parliament on 5 November 1989. Though the agreement stipulated that the Syrian occupation end within two years, Syria did not withdraw its forces from the country until 2005.



President Elias Hrawi, Credit: alchetron.com

The agreement contained many constitutional amendments, which came into force after President Hrawi's sign-off in September 1990.

Among the most major changes:

- The ratio of Christians to Muslims in Parliament was modified from 6:5 to 1:1.
- The term of the Speaker of the House was increased from one year to four years. (Article 44 of the constitution)
- Article 17 of the constitution was amended from *'the executive power is vested in the President of the Republic, who exercises with the assistance of his ministers'* to *'the executive power is vested in the Council of Ministers, who exercise it according to the dispositions of this constitution'*.
- Presidential prerogatives were curtailed:

Parliamentary consultations required before nominating the Prime Minister;

Cannot dismiss or appoint ministers at will;

Cabinet to introduce laws to Parliament;

Cabinet to appoint or dismiss state employees; and

The Chamber of Deputies to take the appropriate measures to bring about the abolition of political confessionalism according to a transitional plan.

The Taif Agreement of 1989 ended the civil war, re-apportioning the seats in the Parliament to provide for equal representation of Christians and Muslims, with each to elect 64 of the 128 deputies.

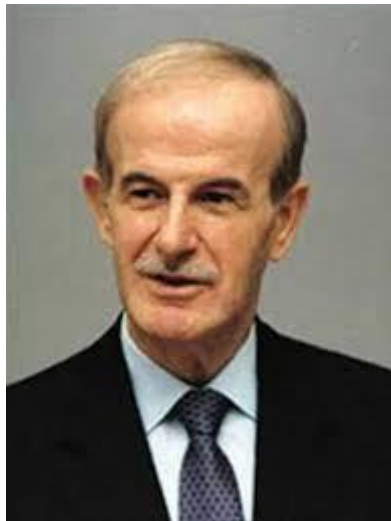
## Parliament Seat Allocation as per Taif agreement

Segment	Before Taif	After Taif
Maronite Catholic	30	34
Eastern Orthodox	11	14
Melkite Catholic	6	8
Armenian Orthodox	4	5
Armenian Catholic	1	1
Protestant	1	1
Other Christian	1	1
Total Christian	54	64
Sunni	20	27
Shia	19	27
Alawite	Nil	2
Druze	6	8
Total Muslim+ Druze	45	64
Grand Total	99	128



Unhappy with the Taif agreement, since it did not provide a deadline for the withdrawal of Syrian troops, General Aoun launched the 'War of liberation' in February 1989 against the Syrian Armed Forces in Lebanon. In October 1990, the Syrian Air Force, backed by the pro-Syrian Lebanese groups attacked the Presidential Palace and forced Aoun to go into exile in Paris.

In May 1991, the Treaty of 'Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination', was signed by President Elias Hrawi of Lebanon and President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, legitimizing the Syrian military presence. It stipulated that Lebanon would not threaten Syria's security and that Syria would protect Lebanon from external threats.



Hafez al-Assad, Credit: wikipedia.org



Elias Hrawi, Credit: wikipedia.org

On 14 February 2005, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafik Hariri was killed along with 21 others in an explosion in Beirut. Hariri had led the anti-Syrian opposition in Lebanon. His assassination triggered the 'Cedar Revolution', a civil, popular movement whose main goal was ending the 30-year long Syrian military occupation of Lebanon.



Rafik Hariri, Credit: the famouspeople.com

Additionally, the movement called for:

- The return of ex-Prime Minister Michel Aoun, in exile since 1991
- Ouster of the Pro-Syrian government of Omar Karami
- Identifying the killers of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri
- Organizing free parliamentary elections without Syrian interference
- Withdrawal of Syrian troops by April 2005.

*(Fifteen years later, in August 2020, the Special Tribunal found Salim Ayyash, a mid-level Hezbollah operative guilty of the murder of Hariri, in absentia. Hezbollah denied any involvement and its leader, Hassan Nasrallah refused to allow the arrest of Ayyash).*

The Cedar Revolution was a chain of demonstrations, especially in Beirut triggered by the assassination of the popular ex-Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri. The peaceful Cedar Revolution was successful and Syria agreed to withdraw its 14000 troops which had been stationed in Lebanon since 1976. The withdrawal was completed on 30 April 2005.

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), there are now about half a million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, living in appalling conditions in camps.

The National Pact of 1943, between the then President Bishara al-Khuri (Maronite Christian) and the Prime Minister Riad Al Solh (Sunni Muslim) was designed to protect the interests of the political elites of these two faiths. However, it soon got unraveled because there was great discontent in those sections of the population that did not get a share in the power.



Camille Habib, Credit: tehrantimes.com

After analyzing the reasons for the unintended catastrophic results of the National Pact, Camille Habib, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Lebanese University, wrote a thoughtful essay, 'Lebanese Politics and the Tyranny of Confessionalism' in *Confluences Méditerranée* (2009/3) in which he made the following key points:

- Lebanon must begin the process of de-confessionalism, because confessional politics did not make room for competitors
- Confessionalism and consociationalism hindered the prospects of building a strong, unified state in Lebanon
- The dichotomy between the civil codes led to the fragmentation of the Lebanese society
- Proportional representation that guarantees fair representation was needed to unify the civil society
- Administrative decentralization was essential for development of all regions
- The State must reform itself to facilitate a culture of dialogue, democracy and peace among the Lebanese people.



Professor Habib was quick to concede: *“There is no solution to the Confessional problem in Lebanon. At the same time, without reforms, the ‘terrible beauty’ that Lebanon is, will become more terrible!”*

Confessionalism has two interpretations: one religious and one political. In Lebanon, they have got so closely inter-twined that it is impossible to think of one without the other.

Confessionalism, in the religious, Christian sense, is a belief in the importance of complete and total acceptance of religious teaching, without any exception. The Confessionals believe that differing interpretations, especially, those that contradict a held belief, cannot be tolerated.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the term confession was primarily used for the documents of belief (*Confessio Augustana*), while the religious communities of Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists were referred to as different ‘religions’ or ‘churches’. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the term confession started to expand to religious bodies sharing a common creed. The original intention to pacify conflicts between the denominations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had opposite effect: The Roman Catholic Church refused to consider itself as merely a confession.

Nowadays, confessionalism is of minor relevance in European state churches. It rose to prominence in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and diminished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In its political sense, Confessionalism is a system of government that is a *de jure* mix of religion and politics. It typically entails distributing political and institutional power proportionally among confessional communities.

Proponents of confessionalism cite it as an effective way to secure the peaceful co-existence of diverse religious and ethnic communities by distributing political power according to its ‘weight’. However, critics point out that such a system can and indeed, has, actually deepened the conflict between religious and ethnic groups. Also, changes in demographics are not catered to, by its rigidity, causing immense damage to the society.

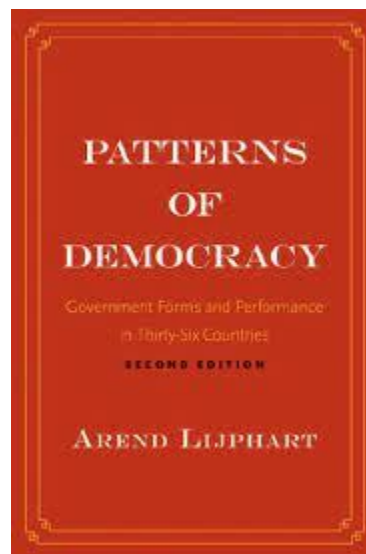
Consociationalism is a form of democratic power sharing.

Arend d'Angremond Lijphart (1936-) is a Dutch-American political scientist teaching at the University of California, San Diego. He is generally credited with popularizing the term. Lijphart however, has confessed that he *"merely discovered what political practitioners had independently invented years earlier"*. Consociationalism was practiced in the Netherlands, between 1857 and 1967 where the society was divided into four segments: Calvinist, Catholic, socialist, and general, although until 1917 there was a plurality ("first past the post") electoral system rather than a

proportional one. In its heyday, most if not all, institutions: schools, universities, hospitals etc. were divided along a 'pillarised' structure.



Arend Lijphart, Credit: wordpress.com



Credit: amazon.in

Political scientists define a consociational state as one which has major internal divisions along ethnic, religious, or linguistic lines, but which remains stable due to consultation among the elites of these groups. Consociational states are often contrasted (favorably) with states having majoritarian electoral systems. The goal of consociationalism is governmental stability to ensure the survival of democracy.

When consociationalism is organized on religious confessional lines, it becomes confessionalism.

In Lebanon, the concept of confessionalism holds an important political meaning, since political power and governmental bureaucracy are organized according to religious confessions (as it happened in Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and other countries before). The National Pact (unwritten covenant) and later the Taif Agreement provide for a Maronite Christian president, a Sunni Muslim prime minister, and a Shia Muslim speaker of parliament. This is a clear example of political confessionalism.

Theoretical arguments aside, as Prof. Camille Habib has stated, Lebanon has to get rid of Confessionalism and Consociationalism.

Easier said than done!

Lebanon is currently undergoing the most serious existential crisis in its troubled history.

After the 15-year civil war (13 April 1975 – 13 October 1990) ended, the government decided to peg its currency to the U.S. dollar. Lebanon's central bank promised convertibility at the rate of 1500 Lebanese pounds to 1 US dollar. That policy brought stability, but it required Lebanon's banks to hold a large reserve of U.S. dollars. Lebanese industry and business also need a continuous flow of dollars to pay for imported raw materials and finished goods, since Lebanon produces little of what it consumes.

For years, Lebanon had no problem attracting dollars. But after 2011, the situation changed. The civil war in Syria and heightened geo-political tensions in the Middle East ruined Lebanese economy. The power and influence of Hezbollah also, deterred foreign investors.

To keep dollars flowing in, Lebanon's central bank developed a plan: banks would offer very generous terms, including an annual interest of 15-20 % on dollar deposits. But the problem was viability: the only way banks could offer such good rates was by either investing them profitably, which was impossible to do in the prevailing circumstances, or by repaying the early deposits with fresh deposits, essentially, a Ponzi scheme!

As President Lincoln is believed to have said (and apparently never did), *"You can fool some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."*

Once the Lebanese bank customers realized the fraudulent nature of the scheme in 2019, there was a run on the banks.



Lebanon has always been a very unequal country, with the politically connected wealthy elites enriching themselves through corruption.

To get out of the tough situation, the government imposed a tax on WhatsApp calls, which most Lebanese families used (many families survive on money sent by relatives living in other countries and thus want to stay in constant touch) because they were free, while the phone calls through telecom companies were extremely expensive. The tax naturally, infuriated people and resulted in violent protests.

The huge explosion at the port in Beirut on 4 August 2020 killed more than 200 people further compounded the misery of the unfortunate people. The explosion pulverized Beirut port and damaged more than half the city. The explosion caused by the detonation of tonnes of ammonium nitrate, a combustible chemical compound used in high-nitrate fertilizer, can also be used to make explosives.

Peter Goldstein of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) has studied the after-effects of the explosion. His research, published by a US Army Agency, showed that all the data are consistent with a yield of around a kiloton when water/saturation is accounted for. *“Water in the near-source environment can have a significant effect on many observations, including crater formation, cloud rise, seismic magnitudes and blast wave effects,”* he said.

The explosion is estimated to have caused at least 218 deaths, 7,000 injuries, and US\$15 billion in property damage, making an estimated 300,000 people (15% of Beirut’s population) homeless.

The World Bank released its report, *The Deliberate Depression*, in late 2020, describing Lebanon as being *‘in the midst of three mega-crises’* (the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the massive explosion at the Port of Beirut on 4 August 2020). The report bluntly stated that *‘the elite capture behind the veil of confessionalism and confessional governance’ is at the root of the economic crisis Lebanon faces, and that this capture has both led to policy inaction and limited ability to implement long-term developmental policies’*.





Credit: Aljazeera.com



Credit: bbc.com





Previous page Credit: cartoonmovement.com



Credit: theguardian.com



Credit: ap.com



Although almost two years have gone by, the accountability for the blast is yet to be fixed.



Lynn Maalouf, Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Amnesty International says that the Lebanese authorities are blocking and stalling the investigation at every turn.

Leaked official documents indicate that the Lebanese authorities: customs, military and security, as well as the judiciary, had warned successive governments of the dangerous stockpile of explosive chemicals at the port on at least 10 occasions in the past six years, yet no action was taken. The President also stated that he had knowledge of the danger but had *"left it to the port authorities to address it."* MPs and high officials have been hiding behind their right to immunity throughout the investigation. This tactic has been used repeatedly in decades-long post-conflict amnesty, effectively shielding perpetrators of serious crimes under international law, and denying thousands of victims any form of justice.

On 10 December 2020, Judge Fadi Sawan, the first investigative judge, charged former Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil, former Public Works ministers Youssef Fenianos and Ghazi Zeaiter, and caretaker Prime Minister Hassan Diab, with criminal 'negligence.' They all refused to appear before the judge. Diab called

the decision a violation of the constitution. Zeaiter and Khalil went a step further and filed a lawsuit to remove Judge Sawan from the investigation, citing immunity for MPs from criminal prosecution.

Judge Sawan suspended the investigation on 17 December 2020 for nearly two months. Shortly afterwards on 18 February 2021, Lebanon's Court of Cassation dismissed Judge Sawan. On 2 July 2021, the new judge assigned to the case, Judge Tarek Bitar, submitted a request to parliament to lift parliamentary immunity for MPs Khalil, Zeaiter, along with several other high-ranking officials. In response, 26 MPs from the bloc supporting Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, Amal Movement, Hezbollah, and Future Movement, signed a petition requesting the launch of a parallel proceedings in an attempt to avoid interrogation by Judge Bitar.

In the latest twist, a lawsuit brought by former minister for Public Works, Youssef Finianos, one of the senior figures Judge Bitar wants to interrogate, has been left in limbo by the retirement of Judge Roukoz Rizk. *"While this lawsuit is not decided, the investigating judge cannot issue the indictment,"* a judicial source said. There can be no ruling in the case, until a replacement is found for Rizk, who reached mandatory retirement age. While Judge Bitar's opponents accuse him of bias and of overstepping his powers, his supporters see his efforts as a bold attempt to hold senior officials to account in a country where politicians' impunity is entrenched since the National Pact of 1943. Hezbollah and its allies boycotted cabinet meetings for months, saying they wanted Judge Bitar removed; Judge Bitar has now retired.

Heiko Wimmen of Crisis Group said described lawsuits that have been hindering progress as "legal theatre" and said obstructing the probe would further damage public trust in the nation's institutions.



Heiko Wimmen, Credit: crisisgroup.org



Credit: newstatesman.com



Credit: theatlantic.com



Lebanon is currently undergoing a most serious existential crisis in its troubled history.

The World Bank in its Report of April 2022 has stated that Lebanon is now three years into an economic and financial crisis that is among the worst the world has ever seen! Real GDP is estimated to have declined by 10.5% in 2021, on the back of a 21.4% contraction in 2020 as policymakers have still not agreed on a plan to address the collapse of the country's development model. The exchange rate continued to deteriorate sharply in 2021, keeping inflation rates in triple digits. The share of the Lebanese population under the national poverty line is estimated to have risen by 9.1 percentage points by end-2021. Lebanon has witnessed a dramatic collapse in basic services, driven by depleting FX reserves and real GDP is projected to contract by a further 6.5% in 2022.



Credit: theatlantic.com

Reuters in its 23 January 2022 report explained it thus:

- Gross domestic product has plunged to an estimated \$20.5 billion in 2021 from about \$55 billion in 2018.





Credit: theatlantic.com

- The Lebanese pound has lost more than 90% of its value, driving up the cost of almost everything in a country reliant on imports, demolishing purchasing power. A soldier's monthly wage, once the equivalent of \$900, is now worth about \$50.
- Poverty rates are sky-rocketing in the population of about 6.5 million, with around 80% of people classed as poor, the U.N. agency ESCWA says.
- The financial system has suffered eye-watering losses, including about \$44 billion at the central bank related to failed efforts to prop up the currency, according to 2020 government figures, a level that is roughly twice the size of GDP.
- Lebanon's banks are paralysed. Savers have been frozen out of U.S. dollar accounts. Withdrawals in local currency apply exchange rates that erase up to 80% of the value.
- Reliant on imported fuel, Lebanon is facing an energy crunch. Even before the crisis, power supplies were in short supply, including in the capital. Now households are lucky to receive more than an hour or so a day. Fuel prices have soared. A ride in a shared taxi, a popular form of transport, cost 2,000 pounds before the crisis, now costs about 30,000 pounds.



Credit: theatlantic.com

- Lebanese are emigrating in the most significant exodus since the 1975-90 civil war, which pitted Lebanon's Christian and Muslim communities against each other and among themselves. Believing their savings are lost, many Lebanese have no plans to return this time as they start over again.
- Among those leaving are doctors. The World Health Organization has said most hospitals are operating at 50% capacity with around 40% of doctors, mostly specialists, permanently emigrating or working part-time abroad.



Credit: npr.org



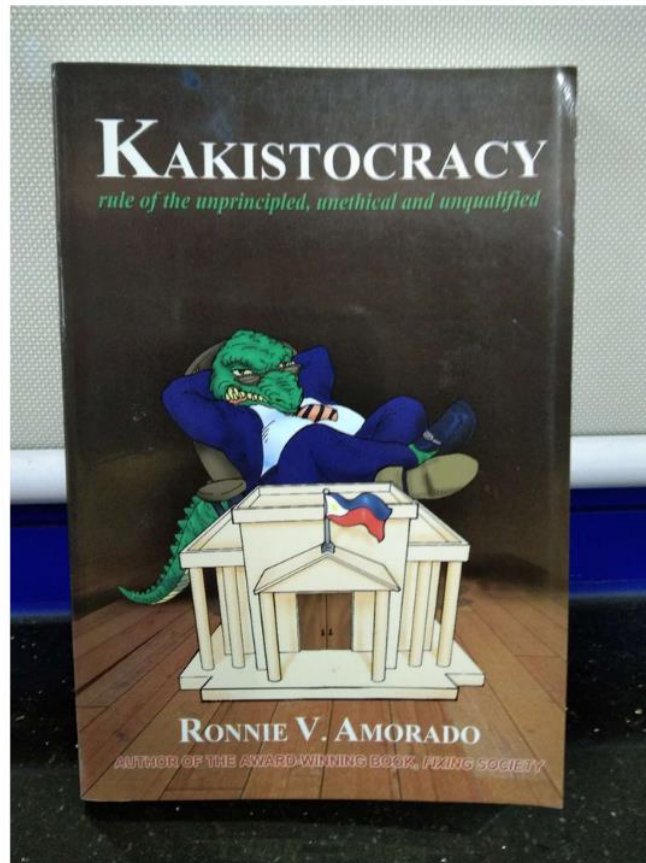
- Officials and the media talk of Lebanon becoming a ‘failed state’. Michel Aoun, the Christian president, warned in December 2021 that the state was ‘falling apart’.

Following the end of the civil war on 13 October 1990, the Lebanese state was turned into a vehicle for self-enrichment by the political class, exploiting the provisions of the Taif Agreement, while the oversight bodies were systematically weakened by underfunding them.

Transparency International’s definition of corruption, *‘the abuse of entrusted power for private gain’* addresses behaviors in both the public and the private sectors, encompassing *‘politicians misusing public money or granting public jobs or contracts to their sponsors, friends and families’*, and bureaucrats and inspectors in the public sector *‘demanding or taking money or favors in exchange for services’*, as well as private firms *‘bribing officials to get lucrative deals’*.

The ‘power-sharing’ system has resulted in a symbiosis of the sectarian political elites and their private sector allies in a way that has rendered the state a parasitic vehicle for self-enrichment and in turn, has strengthened the sectarian *clientelistic* networks.





Credit: Lazada.com.ph

Nasser Saidi, former minister of economy and trade has described Lebanon as a ‘rare combination of an experienced kleptocracy and a kakistocracy’ – a political system ruled by a corrupted political elite, many of whom have used public funds as their personal purse, and which has also ensured that a significant number of incompetent and unqualified individuals have been entrusted with the management of governmental affairs.



Nasser Saidi, Credit: [nassersaidi.com](http://nassersaidi.com)



Prime Minister Rafik Hariri Credit: [cnn.com](http://cnn.com)



Riad Salameh, Credit: [bloomberg.com](http://bloomberg.com)



The poster-children of Lebanese kleptocracy and kakistocracy are Riad Salameh ('Extraordinary Man') and his protégé, Marianne Hoayek (Wonder Woman').

Riad Toufic Salameh (born 17 July 1950) was Vice President, Merrill Lynch when he caught the attention of the late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, who hired him as his personal investment advisor. Impressed, he appointed him Governor of *Banque du Liban* in 1993 for a renewable term of six years (By convention, the Governor of the Banque du Liban is always a Maronite Christian). He was reappointed for four consecutive terms; in 1999, 2005, 2011 and 2017. He is the longest-serving central bank governor in the world.

For decades, he was lauded at home and abroad as a financial wizard who kept the economy running and the currency stable despite wars, assassinations and political turmoil.

Not anymore.

Now, he is being accused of a most unforgivable sin: enriching himself and his patrons and friends through years of corruption. Paris anti-corruption judges have opened an investigation into criminal allegations that Mr. Salameh fraudulently amassed an outsize fortune in Europe by abusing his power. The judicial investigation followed a preliminary inquiry by the French National Financial Prosecutor's Office.



Credit: the cradle.co

Prosecutors in Switzerland have also asked the Lebanese authorities for help with an investigation into suspected embezzlement and money laundering linked to Mr. Salameh and his associates.

The allegations have caused a sensation in a country enduring a crisis that the World Bank said, could rank in the top three worldwide over the last 150 years, a *“brutal economic contraction of a magnitude “usually associated with conflicts or wars.”*

Despite the meltdown, Salameh, the architect of Lebanon’s monetary policy since 1993, has faced no serious calls for his ouster, even though he oversaw a strategy that required ever more borrowing to pay existing creditors, in what critics have called the ‘world’s largest Ponzi scheme’.

What shields Salameh from scrutiny at home is his central role in Lebanon’s complex sectarian and corrupt web of business and political interests. Most monetary officials and former colleagues of Mr. Salameh paint a picture of a shrewd and secretive operator who built an empire inside the central bank and used it to make himself indispensable to the rich and powerful players across Lebanon’s political spectrum.

*“He is not the head of the central bank. He is the accountant for the political mafia,”* said Jamil al-Sayyed, a member of Parliament and former head of Lebanon’s General Security agency, the body that oversees domestic security. *“He protects them, and in protecting him, they protect themselves.”*

The French judges are investigating a complaint by Sherpa, a French anticorruption group, that accuses Riad Salameh, his brother Raja Salameh, other relatives and Marianne Hoayek, who heads the central bank’s executive office, of illicitly sweeping funds from Lebanon into Swiss banks and then laundering millions in France through high-end real estate purchases, including luxury property.

Swiss prosecutors say, documents show that Mr. Salameh hired a brokerage firm owned by his brother Raja Salameh, to handle central bank sales of government bonds, and that from 2002 to 2015 the bank transferred at least \$330 million in commissions to the firm’s Swiss account.

The Swiss prosecutors are looking into transactions between the accounts of Raja Salameh and accounts of powerful political people, including the family of Rafik Hariri, (the former Lebanese prime minister who appointed Mr. Salameh as central bank chief), and his son Saad Hariri, (also an ex-Prime Minister), involving hundreds of millions of dollars.

Riad Toufic Salameh’s defence was brilliant, *“It is really unfair to judge Lebanon as if it was Sweden,”* he said.

In Lebanon's Confessionalism-based political system, the President must be a Maronite Christian, which Mr. Salameh is, and his reputation as a financial mastermind at one point made him a contender for the country's highest office. He once told a businessman who asked about his economic plans, *"Get me the presidency and I'll tell you."*

Mr. Salameh used his powerful position to do favors for power brokers in the Lebanese political system. Businessmen, politicians and journalists producing favorable coverage benefited handsomely from central bank-subsidized loans and other financial arrangements.

The default on \$1.2 billion bond payment in March 2020 underscored the collapse of the economy. *"Our debt has become greater than Lebanon can bear,"* Prime Minister Hassan Diab admitted in a televised speech.

The coronavirus pandemic and the huge explosion in the port of Beirut in August 2020 added to the devastation of the economy.

Estimates put the central bank's losses at \$50 billion to \$60 billion. The I M F has offered assistance, but Salameh blocked an audit sought by it and the U.S.

One theory making rounds, calls Salameh Washington's man in Lebanon. The relationship between Riad Salameh and the US began to be revealed publicly in April 2019 when Lebanese daily newspaper Al-Akhbar published minutes of a meeting between the US Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Marshall Billingsley, and the former Lebanese Economy Minister, Mansour Bteish.

The minutes reveal a US official saying: *"We need a governor of the Banque du Liban and a deputy governor who we can trust, and who is sensitive and with whom confidential information about terrorist financing and money laundering can be exchanged. The situation today is that we trust Governor Riad Salameh."*

Riad Salameh is not just one of 'Washington's men' in Lebanon; he is also the most powerful employee of the Lebanese state.

In its report issued in the spring of 2021, the World Bank described Salameh as 'the exclusive policy maker' in Lebanon's economy.

It is a testimony to Salameh's powerful position that instead of suspending him from his position as the Central Bank's governor till investigations were completed, the Council of Ministers expanded his authority, making him a 'partner' in the development of a financial rescue plan and IMF negotiations for Lebanon. Riad Salameh continues to be protected by the political, religious and media establishments of Lebanon, and by a US administration that refuses to allow him to be dismissed.



Emboldened, in January 2022, Salameh asked that one of the judges investigating him should be removed, because she was biased.

In a hard-hitting article in the Arab News on 20 February 2022, Dr. Dania Khatib called Salameh, ‘The Lebanese mafia’s consigliere who knows too much.’ She cites the case of Byblos Bank chairman Francois Bassil who in 2014 accused the government of stealing depositors’ funds, and was admonished by the Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri and had to retract his accusations and apologize.

Salameh is a consummate deal-maker who was able to adapt to the different governments. When Michel Aoun became president in 2016, it was believed he would get rid of Salameh; however, Salameh got another term as governor of the central bank!

Salameh ruled the Central Bank of Lebanon as Sultan.

He was helped in his misrule by the beautiful Marianne Hoayek, (another Maronite Christian).



Marianne Hoayek, Credit: officialbespoke.com

In a candid interview with the British magazine Bespoke, Hoayek called Salameh ‘an extraordinary man’.

The Extraordinary Man gave her the humongous task of restructuring the Central Bank, when in her words, *“I was doing an internship at the Banque du Liban”!* *“It was a complete re-organization of the bank, going into every department and restructuring from A to Z.*

*It was a massive endeavor that required I know the bank in detail. The project, which was given to me alone, took about three or four years and that was just to cover the biggest departments”.*

The Extraordinary Man created the Executive Office for her, to serve as a buffer between the daily flow of work and him.

Soon, she became the second most powerful officer of the Central Bank. She was given charge of collection and dissemination of data for the two most important committees at the bank, the Investment Committee and the Open Market Committee. The latter comprises of the governor, the deputy governors and the directors of the Bank. It meets every month and that is where the monetary policies are decided.

In addition, the Extraordinary Man asked her to oversee the Corporate Social Responsibility program; work on matters related to the World Bank and the IMF; directly manage the Mini Bank, (bank for the Central Bank employees, who are not permitted to open accounts with commercial banks due to conflict of interest). Finally, she was given the tasks of ensuring smooth coordination among various departments; training new staff; following up on complaints and New Product Development!

Especially, the Circular 331, issued in 22 August 2013.

Circular 331 was a \$ 400 million (raised in 2016 to \$650 million) start-up platform that was the dream of the Extraordinary Man. *“He saw that the world is governed by technology and that Lebanon is a country rich in human resources,”* said Hoayek. *“All that we need is the means.”*

According to the Lebanese law, the Central Bank could not invest in the stock market directly and so, Salameh and Hoayek devised a ‘creative’ mechanism to advance capital to commercial banks, which would then be invested in companies that contribute to the knowledge economy through technological advancement.

The importance of small to medium-sized enterprises in an economy is widely recognized, but in the case of Lebanon, where SMEs constitute 97 per cent of businesses and employ more than half of the working population, their survival and growth is critical to the overall economy. No one could therefore, object to the initiative of the Extraordinary Man and the Wonder Woman!

The Wonder Woman was breathless in espousing the idea: *“It’s an extremely ambitious project. In fact, it is the first and largest of its kind and we expect it to generate a growth of about 1 per cent in GDP over the next three years alone,”*

Sophie Rimington-Pounder, wrote a provocative article in WAMDA online platform on 27 April 2016 under the title, 'Circular 331: where has Lebanon's money gone?' made the following crucial points:

- The entrepreneurship scene in Lebanon is unrecognizable compared to what it was three years ago.
- Although, banks had allocated roughly \$230 million to private venture capital funds, and directly invested another \$40 million, the ecosystem was waiting for Venture Capitalists to announce how they would invest their funds.
- Transparency in transactions was missing, especially, a detailed breakdown of the funds raised and their allocation, was not publicly available, making it difficult to verify how public monies were being spent.
- Banque du Liban's future plans were unknown.

Beirut Today, a community-based platform on 25 September 2017, questioned the officially-proclaimed success of the Circular 331. It complained that *'there were no official reports published by the Central Bank to highlight statistically, the extent to which Circular 331 has been effective.'*

It has been alleged that Riad Salameh's fortune is in excess of two billion euros (\$2.4 billion).

In a surprising development, Salameh on 31 January 2020 admitted to the National News Agency of Lebanon that \$1 billion had been siphoned off by 'the system' and sent abroad. He also confirmed this in an interview with the France24 news channel.

Reports in Lebanese and international media suggest that as much as \$100 billion could be missing from the Lebanese banking system. The IMF on 25 June 2020 estimated the losses of Banque Du Liban at \$49 billion, equivalent to 91 per cent of Lebanon's GDP in 2019! According to the World Bank the Central Bank losses were equal to the total deposits of the country's commercial banks with it. The Government of Lebanon concurred with the IMF and the World bank estimates.

122 political parties fought the parliamentary elections in Lebanon in 2018; the number came down to 88 in 2022. The Taif Agreement of 1989 reapportioned the seats neatly in the Parliament with Christians and Muslims, each getting 64 deputies in the house of 128. A comparative position, as reported by the National News on 17 May 2022 is given below. The final parliamentary party position will become clear after coalitions are formed and the process of government formation begins, which may take months.



## Lebanon Parliament Elections Party Position 2018-2022

Party	2018	2022
Future Movement	20	7
Lebanese Forces + Allies	15	21
Kataeb	3	5
Progressive Socialist Party + Allies	9	8
Independent	6	15
Civil Society	1	13
Free Patriotic Movement + Allies	29	18
Tashnag	-	3
Marada Movement	6	2
Amal	17	15
Pro-Hezbollah Allies + Independent	15	8
Hezbollah	13	13
Total	134	128
Probable Double Counting	6	-

- Future Movement did not contest in 2022; results of ex-members who ran as Independent
- In 2018, Tashnag was part of Free Patriotic Movement + Allies

### The Key Takeaways:

- Hezbollah Lost majority bloc, but retained its own seats.
- Hezbollah may have lost majority, but they have not lost their guns.
- Lack of a decisive majority may result in gridlock preventing the Parliament from passing tough legislation essential to overcome the crisis situation.
- The new Parliament has a dozen independents and eight women, for the first time.
- Ali Hassan Khalil and Ghazi Zeaiter, under investigation for their role in the August 2020 explosion, were re-elected.
- Turnout (41%) was lower than in the previous elections, possibly due to cynicism, emigration and inability to return to their ancestral villages, where they are required to vote.
- Voting irregularities: party supporters harassing opponents, influencing voter choices with cash and gifts.



Tarek Masoud, Credit: youtube.com

Tarek Masoud, Professor of International Relations at Harvard Kennedy School and Rami Khouri, Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs made the following critical observations on 20 August 2020 in their conversation:

- Lebanon is now just another Arab country with a corrupt political elite.
- The State has become militarized.
- Hezbollah is stronger than the government.
- Syria used to control Lebanon after the Civil War, now it's Hezbollah.
- Lebanon has lost its sovereignty.



Rami Khouri,, Credit: aub.edu.lb

Rima Majed, Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut, summed it up beautifully, when he said, *“Lebanon is facing a bleak future, in this country, we don't believe there is rock bottom anymore.”*



Rima Majed, Credit: mei.edu



Sami Hermez, Credit: facebook.com



Sami Hermez, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University in Qatar recalls a plaintive conversation with his friend in Beirut, *“Let us just die in silence. Everyone, just shut up,”* the friend told him in anger and frustration as he saw no hope.

After the explosion of 4 August 2020, some Lebanese intellectuals felt, *“we have not hit rock bottom”* as perhaps *“the war is coming,”*. This feeling he described as *“ghassa - a heartbreak, a lump in the throat, the knot in one’s gut, or the trifecta of these feelings”*.

The Human Rights Watch in its 2022 report has pointed out that the human rights situation in Lebanon deteriorated further in 2021. More than 80 percent of the country’s residents did not have access to basic rights, including health, education, housing and electricity. The World Bank has described Lebanon’s crisis as ‘deliberate depression,’ due to Lebanese leaders’ corrupt mismanagement and lack of political will to take effective policy measures, despite facing the most severe financial crisis in its history.



Credit: al-Arabiya.net

Writing in the Al Arabia news on the eve of the New Year, Makram Rabah said, *‘the Lebanese people need to grasp that no one is interested nor willing to help them out of their self-inflicted crisis and that their salvation can only come if they finally decide to become superheroes themselves to fight off the many devils and villains they supported over the years.’*



Makram Rabah, Credit: youtube.com

This is because the country's ruling establishment has proved over the years to be incorrigible and their appetite for corruption is only matched by with their inability and unwillingness to take responsibility for the terrible state of affairs.

President Aoun (89) is believed to be suffering from serious physical and mental issues that affect his ability to discharge his constitutional duties, but criticism is muted, because of the article 384 of the Lebanese penal code which states: *'Whoever insults the head of state, shall be punished by imprisonment from six months to two years.'*



President Aoun, Credit: Aljazeera.com

Regardless, Aoun has been toying with the idea of extending his presidential term, when it expires in October 2022. By then, he would be 89. His Plan B is to bequeath power to his son-in-law and political heir, Gibran Basil, who is equally enthusiastic about becoming President. Basil's chances have dropped to comically low levels, however, due to US sanctions, diminishing support within the Christian community, and no backing from Hezbollah. In light of that, President Aoun seems to have switched priorities: Plan A is now to extend his own term, and if that fails, Plan B is to make Basil president.



Gebran Bassil, Credit: arabnews.com

Gebran Bassil is the most hated man in Lebanon (and he has very tough competition). He is widely viewed as rapacious, corrupt and arrogant and in his rise to power he has alienated most major Lebanese political actors. As long as he enjoyed good ties with Hezbollah and had Aoun's approval, this attitude was tolerated. But now, it seems, things are changing.

To many in and outside of Lebanon, Gebran Bassil is symbolic of the high-level corruption that has been endemic to the country. During the October 2019 'revolution' when thousands took to the streets, his name was a favorite chant, often with unprintable expletives.



A 2020 interview with Bassil at Davos made CNBC presenter Hadley Gamble a household name in Lebanon after she held him to account for financial benefits he reaped from public office. A few months later, in November 2020, the United States sanctioned him over corruption charges.



Bassil claimed this was part of a character assassination plot against him, cooked up by his political enemies. His party Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) claimed the accusations were aimed not just at Bassil, but at weakening the status of Lebanon's Maronite Christians whom he represents.



Marco Carnelos, Credit: liberoquotidiano.it

Marco Carnelos, an Italian diplomat who has been ambassador to several Middle-Eastern countries and the UN, was uncharacteristically blunt when he wrote in the Middle East Eye, on 16 July 2021 that Lebanon is a failed state.

*Lebanon's political elites are as impervious to change as granite', he wrote. 'The threat of international sanctions has not pushed the country's political movements to abandon their power to veto the formation of a new government, if not to their liking. Nor has it done anything to change the kleptocracy that brought the nation to its knees. Protests against the collapsing economy, and among those seeking justice for the 2020 blast, have been heavily suppressed'.*

Lebanon is a giant kleptocracy.

All top Lebanese political leaders have assets and bank accounts in the West. The US and EU treasuries know where they are; they have the bank account numbers. Targeting them would provide real leverage over Lebanon's recalcitrant power brokers. But, will this be enough to stop Lebanon's time bomb from ticking? Is it even possible to save Lebanon by cornering its political leaders and staunching the flow of money fleeing the country?

Or would it be better to wait for a complete collapse as the draconian medicine to kill the cancer of its corrupt political class to start from the scratch?

And sacrifice the poor, hapless people in the process?



Credit: Nathalie Lees for The Guardian

What is the endgame for Lebanon?

Lebanon is in a *cul de sac*. The 2022 elections have come and gone.

As Professor Habib of the Lebanese University poignantly pointed out, *“There is no solution to the Confessional problem in Lebanon. At the same time, without reforms, the ‘terrible beauty’ that Lebanon is, will become more terrible!”*

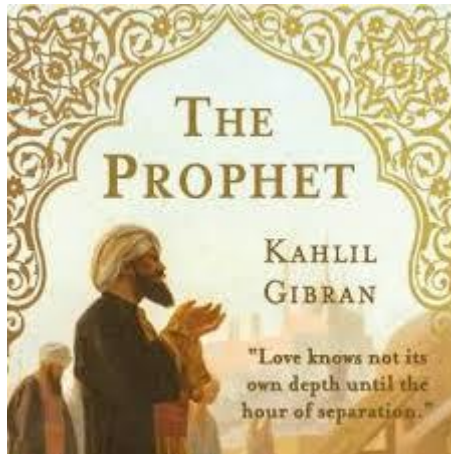
The western powers are tired of intervening in cultures and polities they do not understand and may be, they have learnt something from their costly mistakes of the last century of fruitless and counter-productive interventions. Their electorates too, are busy fighting their own internal wars and have no patience or sympathies for the foreign, poor, teeming millions.

So, the Lebanese have no one.

Even their gods seem to have abandoned them.

Kahlil Gibran said in his book, the Prophet,

*“You have been told that, even like a chain, you are as weak as your weakest link. This is but half the truth. You are also as strong as your strongest link.”*



Credit: facebook.com

The Prophet of Kahlil Gibran was published in 1923. It is his best-known work and has been translated in 100 languages. It is one of the best-selling books of all time; it has never been out of print.

Though born a Maronite Christian, Gibran was influenced by the Bahá'í Faith, Islam and the mysticism of the Sufis. His literary influences included William Blake, Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson.





The book is made up of 26 prose-poems, delivered as sermons by a wise man called Al Mustapha. He is about to set sail for his homeland after 12 years in exile on the fictional island of Orphalese, when the people of the island ask him to share his wisdom on the big questions of life: love, family, death etc. Among the questioners is a lawyer who asks, *What of our Laws, master?* And Al Mustafa answers,

*You delight in laying down laws,  
Yet you delight more in breaking them.*

*Like children playing by the ocean who build sand-towers with constancy,  
And then destroy them with laughter.*

*But while you build your sand-towers, the ocean brings more sand to the shore,  
And when you destroy them, the ocean laughs with you.  
Verily, the ocean laughs always with the innocent.  
But what of those to whom life is not an ocean,  
And man-made laws are not sand-towers.*

*But to whom life is a rock,  
And the law a chisel with which they would carve it in their own likeness?  
And of him who comes early to the wedding-feast,  
And when over-fed and tired, goes his way saying that  
All feasts are violation and all feasters, lawbreakers?*

*What shall I say of these, save that they too stand in the sunlight,  
But with their backs to the Sun?  
They see only their shadows, and their shadows are their laws.  
And what is the sun to them but a caster of shadows?*

*And what is it to acknowledge the laws  
But to stoop down and trace their shadows upon the earth?  
But you who walk facing the Sun, what images drawn on the earth can hold you?  
You who travel with the wind, what weather-vane shall direct your course?  
What man's law shall bind you if you break your yoke but upon no man's prison door?  
What laws shall you fear if you dance but stumble against no man's iron chains?  
And who is he, that shall bring you to judgment  
If you tear off your garment yet leave it in no man's path?*

*People of Orphalese, you can muffle the drum,  
And you can loosen the strings of the lyre,  
But who shall command the skylark not to sing?*

Gibran did not consider himself a philosopher.

Like Socrates, Gibran is a philosopher of life and his prose-poems invite the reader to meditate on life.

What would Gibran think of his land of today?

When Kahlil Gibran wrote about Lebanon at the age of thirty-seven, he had been in exile for twelve years. The country he knew was long gone, though of course, he did not know that. He returned to his native village, Becharre/ Bsharre (in north Lebanon) in 1931, in a casket to be buried there.



Credit: the961.com

In 'The Eye of the Prophet', he expressed his love for his land beautifully:

*You have your Lebanon and I have mine.  
You have your Lebanon with her problems,  
And I have my Lebanon with her beauty.*

*You have your Lebanon with all her prejudices and struggles,  
And I have my Lebanon with all her dreams and securities.*

*Your Lebanon is a political knot, a national dilemma, a place of conflict and deception.  
My Lebanon is a place of beauty and dreams of enchanting valleys and splendid mountains.*

*Your Lebanon is inhabited by functionaries, officers, politicians, committees and factions.  
My Lebanon is for peasants, shepherds, young boys and girls, parents and poets.*

*Your Lebanon is empty and fleeting,  
My Lebanon will endure forever.*

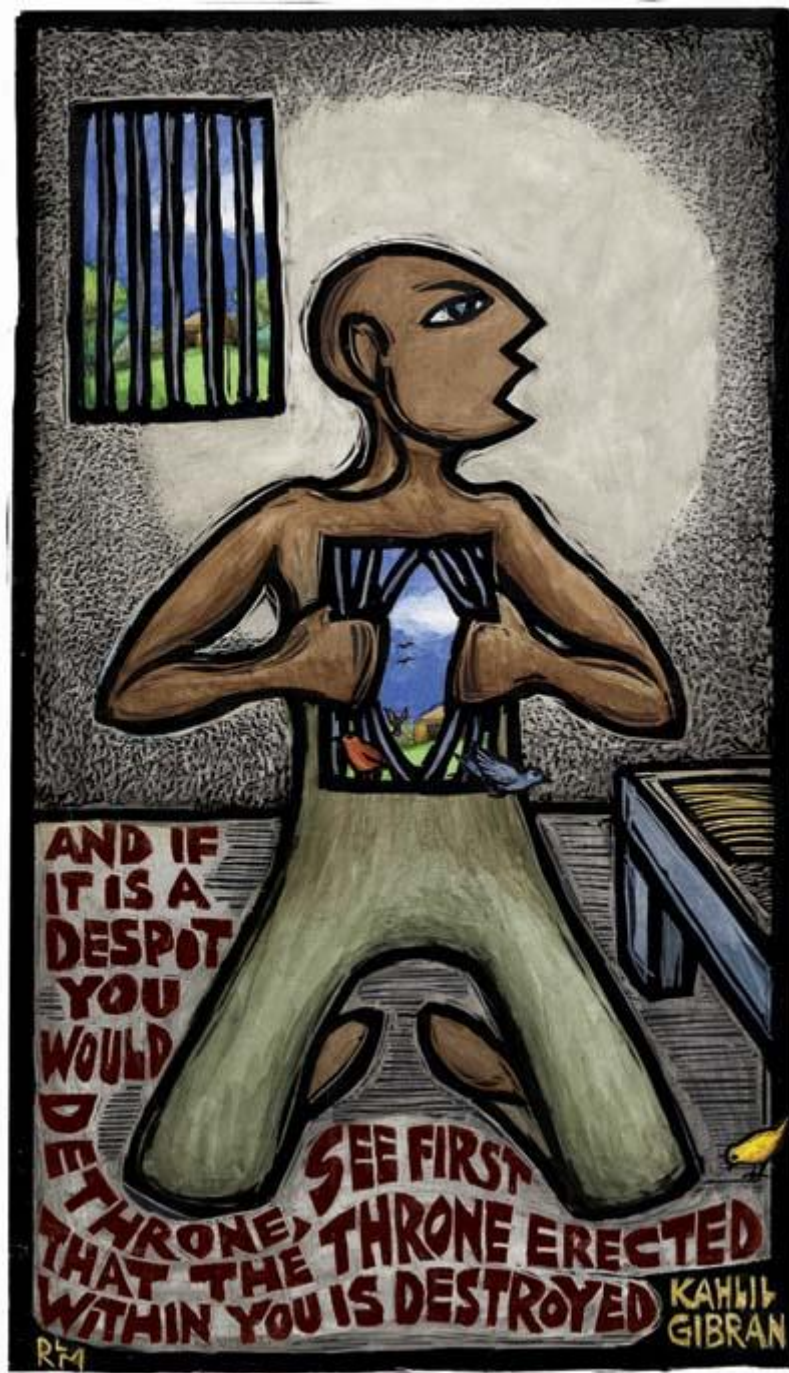


Credit: pinterest.com



Poets are sensitive people. They see beauty in ugliness, laughter in tears and life in death.

Gibran the philosopher-poet possibly foresaw that 'your' Lebanon is committing a slow suicide, so he gave it a song to sing while *'standing naked in the wind, to melt in the Sun, to seek God, unencumbered'*.



Credit: rimartstudio.com



Credit: [lebanonuntravelled.com](http://lebanonuntravelled.com)



Credit: [thecultureconcept.com](http://thecultureconcept.com)

*For what is it to die,  
But to stand naked in the wind and  
To melt into the sun?*

*And what is it to cease breathing,  
But to free the breath from its restless tides,  
So that it may rise and expand  
And seek God unencumbered?*



Credit: telfair.org





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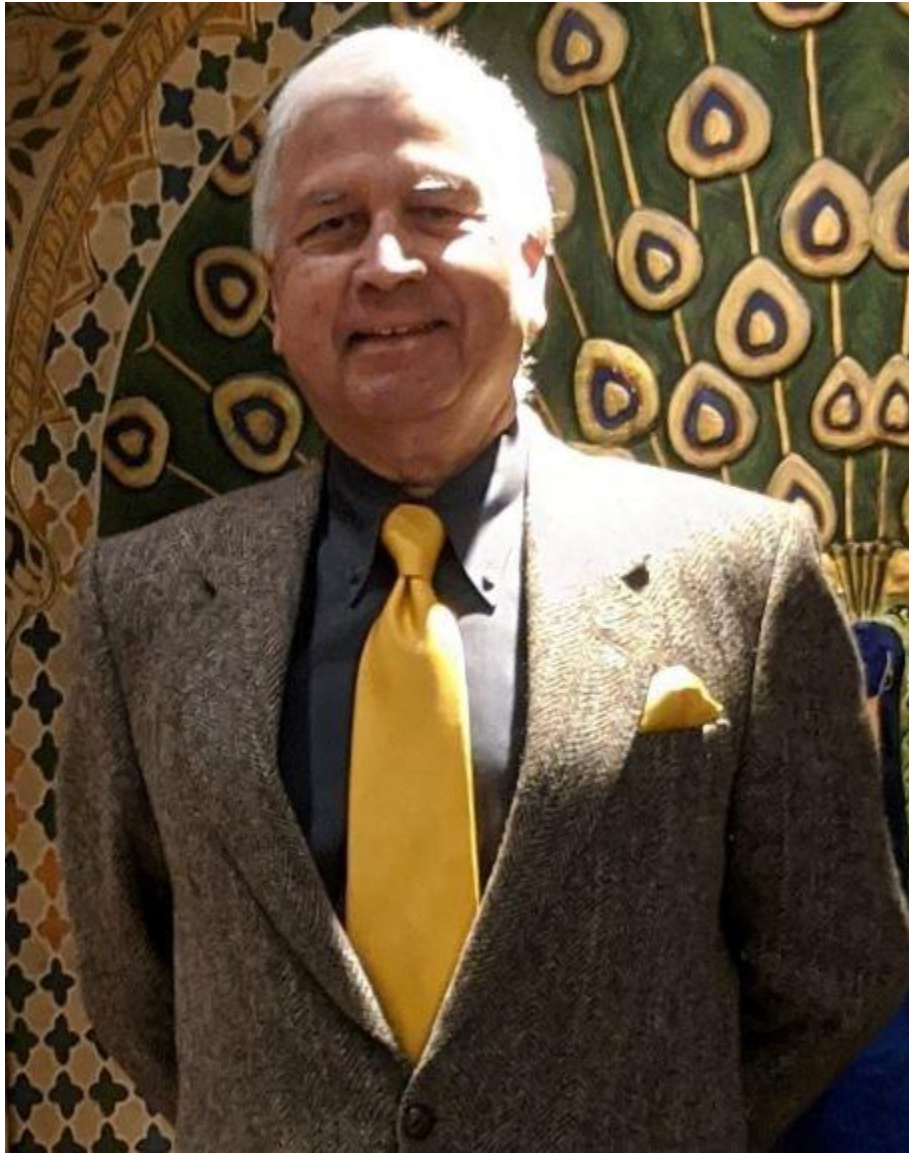
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Turkey

Sultan Selim I vs. Ataturk

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